



Onion prices see a fall, more relief likely in 1-2 weeks | 6

30.5° MAXIMUM | **15.6°** MINIMUM
TEMP ON FRIDAY
FORECAST: Moderate fog likely. Max & min temperatures on Saturday would be around 30°C and 15°C.
MOONSET 8.17AM (SUN) MOONRISE 5.39PM (SAT)
SUNSET 5.27PM (SAT) SUNRISE 6.45AM (SUN)

TIMES CITY

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2024



Delhi Police planning to form a dedicated MCOCA cell | 4

396

DELHI AQI
ON FRIDAY
(VERY POOR
CATEGORY)

NE Festival is back with new cultural experiences | 3



Choking Air Prompts More Govt Measures

Staggered Timings For Central, State Govt Staff

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chief minister Atishi on Friday announced staggered timings for govt offices in Delhi in a bid to tackle traffic congestion and reduce pollution levels. The move mainly aims to ease vehicular traffic during peak hours, she said.

Under the new schedule, Municipal Corporation of Delhi offices will operate from 8.30 am to 5 pm, central govt offices from 9 am to 5.30 pm, and Delhi govt offices from 10 am to 6.30 pm, Atishi stated in a post on X.

The commission for air quality management imposed GRAP III measures from Friday onwards after the air quality remained in the severe category for two consecutive days. On Friday, the city's air quality was in the severe category with an AQI of 41.

Reacting to the govt's decision, BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj alleged that AAP govt was only making announcements and shirking its responsibilities. "Govt offices in Delhi and NCR contribute less than 10% to the vehicles on the road, yet CM merely adjusted the timings

for govt employees to report to their offices, considering it a solution to the problem," she said.

Swaraj said millions of employees in private sector companies in Delhi-NCR contributed to almost 40% of the vehicles on the road, and it would have been better if Delhi govt promoted work-from-home policies. If Atishi's govt wants to change office timings, it should consider separating the opening and closing times for govt offices, private company offices, and shops, as this may help reduce road traffic, she added.

Raj Niwas said that the issue of air pollution had been discussed at length in the meeting of DDMA on Oct 24. Amongst other issues which were discussed, the proposal mooted by DMRC to introduce staggered timings for govt offices was also discussed. "Had endorsed the proposal and had suggested that there should be strict enforcement of the same in govt offices to reduce congestion on roads," said Lieutenant governor VK Saxena in a note to the chief minister.

"It should have come into effect by Nov 1 itself," LG stated. Meanwhile, govt is expected to ensure that other measures, as discussed in the said meeting of DDMA, are enforced strictly in the short term, he added.

AAP govt, meanwhile, did not respond to the statements.

106 shuttle buses to check private vehicle use: Rai

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Environment minister Gopal Rai said that in the wake of GRAP III measures imposed by CAQM from Friday onwards, Delhi govt would augment public transport and start shuttle bus services. He said that 106 shuttle buses would be started, of which 40 would cater to govt employees and pick them up from different locations.

Rai said that a meeting was held with officials of different departments and agencies concerned, including MCD, PWD, irrigation and flood department, DSIDC, transport department, DMRC, DTC and education department, to ensure that all measures under GRAP III are implemented properly. The minister added that several important decisions were taken during the meeting.

"The first of these was the introduction of 106 shuttle buses by DTC to boost public transport in Delhi. These buses will run 1,844 trips, with 40 buses specifically meant for govt employees. The aim is to reduce private vehicle use and lower pollution. The shuttle services will connect various colonies, including Dwarka, Nehru Place and CGO Complex, and will serve offices in areas such as Badarpur, Janakpuri and Paharganj," Rai said.

To encourage further use of public transport, Delhi Metro has also decided to increase 60 trips, the minister added.

MCD has extended the operating hours of 65 mechanical road sweeping machines, which are now running from 6 am to 4 pm. There is an improvement in air quality and pollution levels are set to drop further by Saturday," Rai further said.

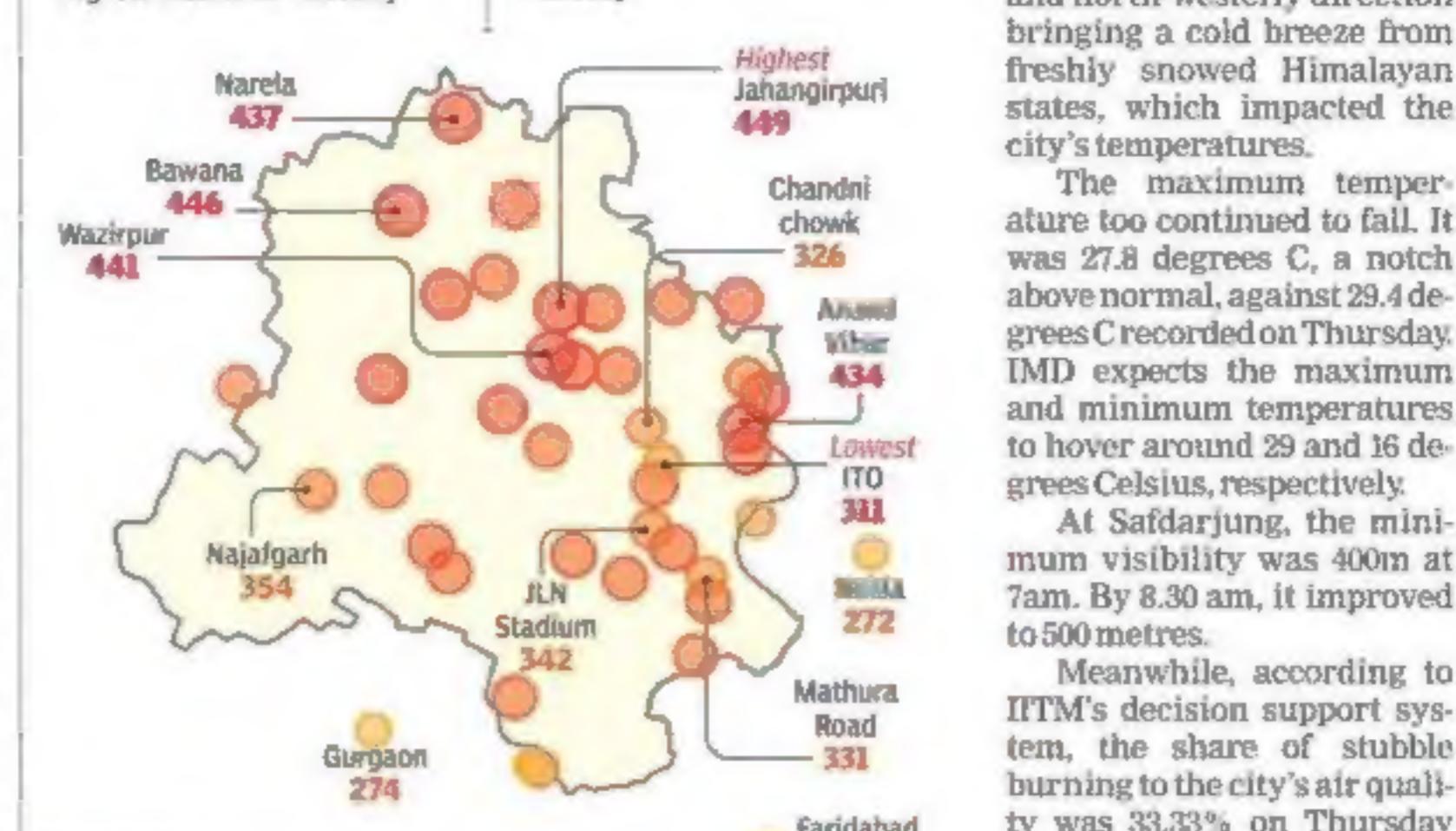
The minister also reiterated the measures and curbs under GRAP III, which include restrictions on BS4 diesel and BS3 petrol vehicles. "To ensure the effective implementation of these measures, the transport department has deployed 84 teams... Violators will face a fine of Rs 20,000. We are confident that Delhi's pollution levels will decrease soon. We all work together responsibly to reduce pollution from our end," he said.

WHAT ARE YOU SMOKING?

Photo: Rajesh Mehta

► At 396, AQI improves from 'severe' to 'very poor' on Friday
► Minimum temperature is 15.6 degrees Celsius, lowest of the season, on Friday
► Second lowest was 16.1 degrees Celsius on Thursday

► The air quality is likely to improve in 'very poor' category from Saturday to Monday
► Stubble burning share increases from 30% on Wednesday to 33.3% on Thursday



PROMINENT POLLUTANTS

Pollutant	Min	Avg	Max
PM2.5	270	432	500
PM10	207	434	500
NO2	99	117	142
CO	86	103	159
NH3	10	13	17
OZONE	5	20	31
SO2	2	14	35

Vibha.Sharma@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Municipal Corporation of Delhi on Friday issued a directive to the Ghazipur landfill to stop biomining legacy waste, keeping in mind the implementation of GRAP III norms.

Officials said that except for the dumping of garbage at the landfill, other work will be discontinued for now. "We have communicated to them and taken other steps, such as arranging for sprinklers to mitigate dust emission at the site. We are ensuring all steps at the three landfills in accordance with CAQM norms. However, the operation of the waste-to-energy plants will continue," an MCD official said.

"MCD has received the nod from Supreme Court for the project's Phase II. Based on the requirement, MCD may pursue agencies concerned for necessary permissions to continue biomining," an official said.

At Bhalswa, biomining of all 45 lakh tonnes was completed by the end of Aug, which was within the targeted period. A vast plot was also procured after clearing the legacy waste under Phase I. "Further, despite a four-

month delay, the concessionaire responsible for the biomining work at the Okhla landfill achieved the initial target of 30 lakh tonnes by Oct. Though we planned to give it a contract for an additional 15 lakh tonnes as per initial terms and conditions, we have now put the proposal on hold as the court gave a nod for allocating fresh contracts for biomining," the official said.

In comparison, at Ghazipur, the process of biomining was slow, and only 12-13 lakh tonnes of waste was processed till the end of Sept.

Phase II of the biomining project includes processing 30 lakh MT of waste at two landfills — Bhalswa and Ghazipur — and 20 lakh tonnes at Okhla.

the city's PM2.5, while Jhajjar contributed 5.5%. According to the CPCB, the PM2.5 levels of the city oscillated between 203.4 to 227.4 micrograms per cubic metre, against national standards of 60 units and WHO's 15 units for 24 hours. The PM10 oscillated from 350 to 371.8 per cubic metre, against the national standard of 100 units and WHO's 45 units.

Meanwhile, in Gurgaon, the city's 24-hour average AQI declined to 304, under 'very poor' category, from 321 the previous day. The monitoring station at Gwalpahari recorded the highest AQI at 369, followed by 350 at Sector 51, Teri Gram (313), and Vikas Sadan (287).

The air quality in Noida remained 'very poor' on Friday, with a smoky haze, lingering over Noida for the third consecutive day, becoming a serious health concern for the residents. The average AQI in the city was recorded at 323 on the day, after touching 347 on Thursday and 359 the day before.

An analysis of particulate matter levels at the city's four air quality monitoring stations showed PM2.5 and PM10 levels were the highest in Sector 62, which is right next to the Delhi-Meerut Expressway and sees very high vehicular movement.

GRAP III: Biomining of waste at Ghazipur to stop

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Phase II of the biomining project includes processing 30 lakh MT of waste at two landfills — Bhalswa and Ghazipur — and 20 lakh tonnes at Okhla.

There is also a provision for giving an extension to process 15 lakh MT at two landfills and 10 lakh MT at Okhla if the concessionaires complete the work in a time-bound manner, the official said.

In July 2019, 280 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste was assessed at the three landfills. Till Sept 5, 2024, 146.9 lakh MT of legacy waste was processed. As of now, the balance quantity of waste at the dumpsite is 159.87 lakh MT as fresh waste continues to be dumped at Bhalswa and Ghazipur.

As a result, MCD has already pushed the target date for levelling the Ghazipur, Bhalswa and Okhla landfills to Dec 2028. This is the fourth occasion of the deadline being postponed.

DELHI POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE
Website : <http://dpcc.delhigovt.nic.in>

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- Potholes on Roads
- Visible smoke from vehicle exhaust
- Air Pollution due to industries
- Obstruction of pavements causing vehicular congestion
- Dumping of Construction & Demolition Waste
- Dust Pollution due to Construction/ Demolition activity

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Air Better Than 2023, But All Not Well

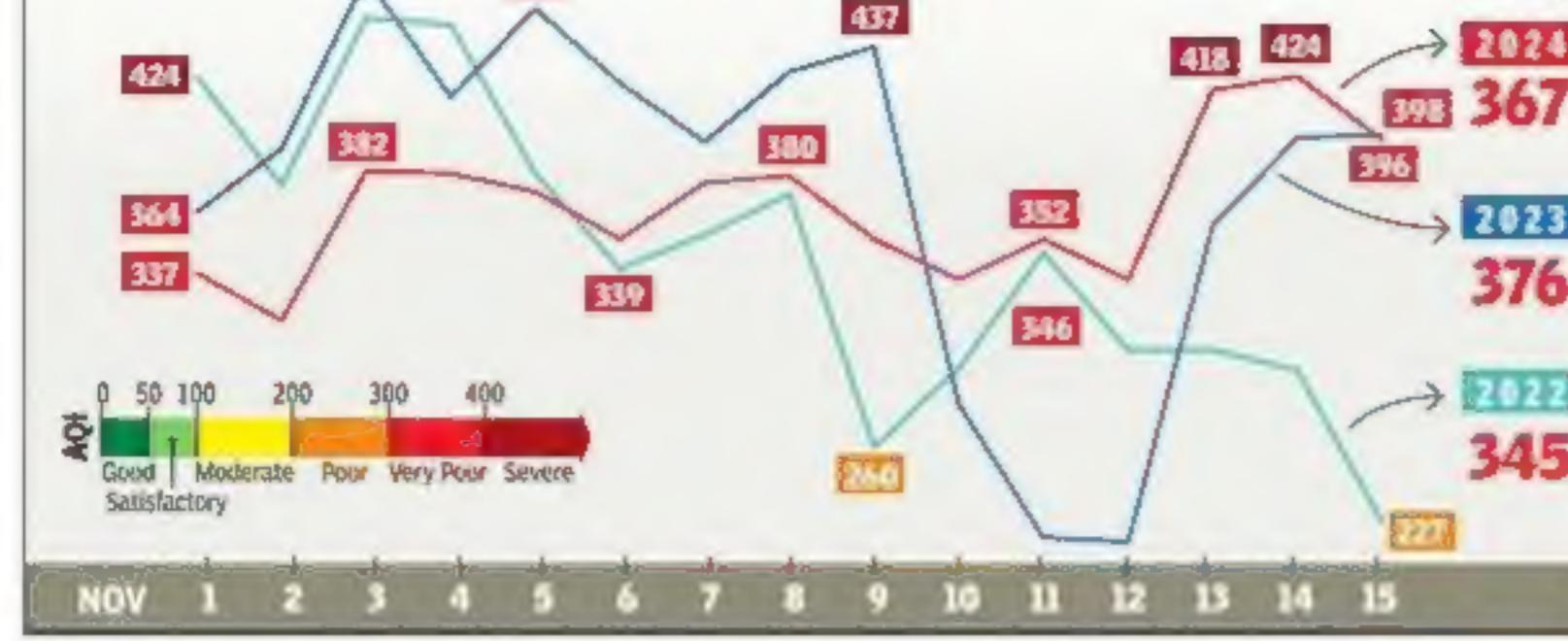
Nov First Fortnight Pollution Higher Than In 2022, Sees 13 'Very Poor' Days

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New Delhi: With an average air quality index of 367 in the first fortnight, the month of Nov is recording higher pollution than two years ago. Though the average AQI in the period was lower than last year, it was higher than in 2022. The Central Pollution Control Board's data shows average AQI during Nov 1-15 was 376 in 2023 and 345 in 2022.

During the first 15 days of the month this year, Delhi recorded 13 'very poor' air days and two 'severe' days, including 12 consecutive 'very poor' days when AQI surpassed 300 before 'severe' readings on Nov 13 and 14. No 'good' to 'poor' days were seen in the fortnight. In comparison, the first fortnight of Nov last year had six 'severe' days, six 'very poor' days and three 'poor' days.

Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director, research and advocacy, Centre for Science and Environment, said, "This year, Diwali was before November. Even though stubble burning increased in this period, its contribution to PM2.5 was highly variable. Once again, this elevation in pollution points at the high influence of local pollution."



We need to step up action against key sources of pollution."

TOI had earlier reported that Nov 1-15 was the most polluted stretch in the year in Delhi since it coincides with peak stubble burning, Diwali firework use and an increase in traffic intensity around festivals. At this time, meteorological conditions, including slow wind, low temperature and inversion, also adversely impact dispersion of pollutants. This year, Diwali was observed on Oct 31, while the festival was celebrated on Nov 12 last year. The average AQI during Nov 1-15 from 2018 to 2023 is 371, according to a Delhi Pollution Control Committee analysis.

Oct this year too was the most polluted in the past four years. CPCB's data shows that the city's average AQI of 231 in Oct this year was the highest since 2020, when it was 265. The figure was 219 last October, 210 in 2022 and 173 in 2021. In 2019, it was 234; 269 in 2018; 285 in 2017; 271 in 2016; and 264 in 2015.

The air quality is likely to remain in the 'very poor' category in Delhi for the next seven days, according to the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi, the forecasting body under the Union ministry of earth sciences.

Green curbs take 3.8L vehicles off city roads

Abhinav.Rajput@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Nearly 3.8 lakh vehicles are off Delhi's roads after the implementation of restrictions under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stage III on Friday on the plying of BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel vehicles as well as those with lower emission standards.

These norms, formulated by the Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas, kicked in on Friday after Delhi's air quality index recorded 'severe' category readings. CAQM orders the implementation of GRAP III regulations generally when AQI crosses 400.

The vehicle restriction has placed close to 1.5 lakh petrol four-wheelers under the 'not to ply' category, according to govt data until 2023.

Of these, 1.3 lakh are Bharat Stage-III compliant, 16,397 are under Euro 2 norms, and 3,752 under Euro 3 standards. In the diesel vehicle category, 2.8 lakh are off the road - 2.3 lakh under BS-IV and 1,555 under Euro 4.

Officials said the department maintains yearly data by bifurcating petrol and diesel as per emission

standards, and the actual number by now would be around 30,000 less, including both. The total number of motor vehicles on the road in the NCT of Delhi on March 31, 2023, was 79.45 lakh, as per the economic survey of 2023-2024. Of these, 20,71,115 are cars

and jeeps, 83,278 are taxis, 2,65,739 are goods vehicles, and 1,18,506 are other passenger vehicles.

Bharat Stage or BS is the emission standard all motor vehicles have to comply with if they are to be sold and driven in India. All new vehicles sold

and registered in the country should be compliant with the BS-VI emission standards. Euro or European standards are also vehicle emission standards for pollution.

The first emission norms in India were introduced in 1991 for petrol and the next year for diesel vehicles.

India 2000, the predecessor to BS II, was introduced in 2000. BS II was

These norms, formulated by CAQM, kicked in on Friday after Delhi's air quality index recorded 'severe' category readings of over 400

rolled out in 2005. In 2005 and 2006, BS III was also rolled out in NCR and several other cities in a bid to check pollution. This was almost similar to European standards (Euro III), which were in place between 2000 and 2005 in most western countries.

Anil Chhikara, faculty at the Asian Institute of Transport Development, said: "These things are fine as short-term measures, but if you need a long-term solution, then you need to fix congestion and improve public transport."

On the video call, the senior citizens saw a man, presumably an officer sitting in front of a Mumbai Police logo. He explained to the man what had happened and was told that he seemed to be lying and his bank details were needed to verify the claims about not having sent the parcel. The call was then transferred to another individual, who introduced himself as a senior CBI officer and spoke with authority.

"He instructed me to move

to a private room to avoid eavesdropping," the elder recalled.

New Delhi: The scammers had full control over my brain and body and they deceived me out of my entire savings, unturned a 77-year-old retired engineer, who was fleeced of over Rs 10 crore in three tranches.

On Oct 14, they claimed his brother's name had emerged during their probe. "They told me to tell my brother, else they would take him into custody. I went to my brother who con-

Getty Images/Stockphoto



POLLUTION CAUSE AND CASUALTY

2 yrs on, project on bus queue shelters still at tender stage

Abhinav.Rajput
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New Delhi: There are few takers for Delhi govt's ambitious plan to build 1,400 bus queue shelters, which was initiated two years ago. With multiple tender negotiations between the transport department and prospective bidders yielding no results, the project is now unlikely to take off before the assembly elections.

In 2022, Delhi govt envisioned constructing 1,397 bus shelters across the city. These shelters were also designed to feature digital displays showing real-time bus information and enhanced security measures, including CCTV surveillance and panic buttons.

A senior official of the transport department said that most of the bidders backed out because many of these bus shelters were in outer Delhi, which they did not find economically viable for earning through advertising. "We did multiple tenders but could not attract bidders. We will now tweak the conditions and float the tenders again," the official added.

Another official in the department said that there was hardly any chance for the project to be executed before the polls. He added that potential bidders were worried about

costs and financial feasibility too. "If you see the bus queue shelters of Delhi, we use heavy metals."

He further said, "Now, we may plan to float the tenders in clusters by clubbing shelters of more than one route, but this decision can be taken only after fresh policy meetings."

"I would like to highlight that

At his first press conference after the election, Khinchli said the obstacles, created under 'Operation Lotus', would prove ineffective and Delhi's residents would respond appropriately in the coming assembly polls.

He alleged that attempts were made to purchase councillors during the election.

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He further said, "Now, we may plan to float the tenders in clusters by clubbing shelters of more than one route, but this decision can be taken only after fresh policy meetings."

"I would like to highlight that

the mayoral election, which was stalled for the past seven months, was hindered by the anti-Dalit policies of BJP govt. Their motive was clear — they didn't want a Dalit to hold the mayor's position," he said, slamming BJP for indulging in horse trading and attempting to buy out councillors for votes.

Reacting to his statement, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that it was surprising that in his first press conference, the new mayor chose to make a political statement, instead of showing any vision. "Delhi is seeing extreme pollution, facing a sanitation crisis, and cases of malaria, chikungunya and

dengue are rising rapidly. MCD has a crucial role in resolving each of these problems. But surprisingly, the new mayor did not speak a word on them, and instead used the opportunity to unduly praise Arvind Kejriwal," he said.

Khinchi said that on Thursday, BJP's sole agenda was to manipulate situations in places where they otherwise fail to gain power. "The public has always given a strong response to such actions, and in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, they will once again give a resounding answer by electing AAP with a massive majority," he said.

Praising former mayor Shelly Oberoi, ex-deputy mayor Aaley Mo-

hammad Iqbal, and former leader of the House Mukesh Goyal, Khinchli said that the work carried out by them will be taken forward. "Deputy mayor Ravinder Bhardwaj and I are committed to improving Delhi's sanitation system further, making it more efficient and better managed. During the last term, under the leadership of our AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal, 10,000 sanitation workers were regularised, and their salaries were ensured to be credited in the first week of every month. We will continue with these efforts," he said.

He stated that the party within MCD would fully support Delhi govt's efforts to combat pollution.

Two arrested at IGI over fake schemes to enter Malaysia

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Two Punjab-based agents were arrested at IGI Airport for orchestrating an elaborate scheme involving fake Malaysian entry stamps and illegal border crossings, police reported on Friday.

The suspects, identified as Kanta Singh (30) and Gurpreet Kaur (32), were apprehended after their client, Sandeep Kaur, was detained during a document inspection that revealed counterfeit Malaysian immigration stamps in her passport.

The operation came to light when Sandeep Kaur, who was promised a lucrative job abroad, was fired from her position in Malaysia and attempted to return to India through Thailand. Upon her arrival at the IGI Airport, an examination of her travel documents exposed the fraudulent activity.

According to police, the agents arranged Sandeep Kaur's journey to Thailand and then facilitated her illegal entry into Malaysia via the "donkey route" — a term used for unauthorised border crossings. The agents also obtained fake Malaysian immigration stamps to create the illusion of a legitimate travel history.

"This was a well-orchestrated syndicate that duped innocent job-seekers with the promise of employment abroad," said DCP (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani.

Police had already arrested one of the key members of the syndicate, Raju, from Amritsar, Punjab. The latest arrests of Kanta Singh and Gurpreet Kaur dealt a significant blow to the operation.

Further investigation to trace other individuals involved in the scheme is underway, police said.



The 12th edition of this annual event is being held from Nov 15 to 17 at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in Delhi

wahati with 10 other team members and am super excited to be here."

The glamour edge — the fashion show — featured collections by 16 talented designers from the Northeast. Models walked the ramp to live music, weaving a narrative that captured the region's colours, tradition and aesthetics.

But there was space also for folk artisans. Yoho from Nagaland happily said, "Over the years, I have experienced how this festival helps artisans like me. My woolen handmade products resonate with the winter season in Delhi."

The excitement reached its peak when Assam's celebrated singer Zubeen Garg took the stage, delivering a performance that left the audience spellbound. The festive at-

mosphere was amplified by rocking sets from Aryan Katech, Jack of SpadeZ, Rocky Glock, Sheldawn, Ring Dangshu, Just Chorus and DJ Loki, each adding their own distinct flair to the celebration.

"I specifically came to the event for my first visit to hear Zubeen Garg," said colleague Kshitij. "I've always loved his music. I decided to linger on to hear the other artists. And the variety of food is amazing."

Organised by Socio-Cultural Trust Trend MMS, with the support of the Union ministry of development of the northeastern region, Delhi Police, and various central and state govt departments, the event aims to promote tourism, entrepreneurship and cultural awareness. Shyamkumar Mahanta, chief minister of state for textiles.

At the B2B Tourism Meet, industry leaders convened to discuss opportunities in the Northeast. Padmapani Bora, IRS, secretary of tourism, and managing director, Assam Tourism Development Corporation, said, "The state offers everything from heritage and scenic beauty to fascinating nightlife and shopping experiences. With the International Tourism Mart in Kaziranga later this month, we want to spotlight the Northeast's tourism potential."



In 2022, Delhi govt envisioned constructing 1,397 bus shelters across the city

Sarai Kale Khan Chowk Gets Renamed After Birsa Munda

Shah Unveils Statue Of Tribal Leader, Recalls His Courage

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi Union home minister Amit Shah on Friday renamed Sarai Kale Khan Chowk as the Birsa Munda Chowk at an event celebrating the tribal leader's 150th birth anniversary in Baansera.

Shah commended Union minister of housing and urban affairs Manohar Lal Khattar for executing this change.

He also unveiled a 20-foot statue of Birsa Munda at Baansera's entrance and acknowledged the effort in restoring the 30-acre site, which now serves as a bird sanctuary.

"I was told by LG VK Saxena how this place used to be a site full of waste earlier and today the scenario has changed," he said. Shah expressed the country's enduring gratitude to Birsa Munda for his

independence movements and resistance against religious conversion.

He noted that during a period when the British controlled both India and much of the world, Birsa Munda demonstrated remarkable courage in opposing religious conversions. The day is celebrated as Janatiya Gaurav Divas across the country, and this whole year will be celebrated as Adivasi

Anindya Chattopadhyay



TOUCH OF FREEDOM: A 20-foot statue of Birsa Munda has been placed at the entrance of Baansera

PWD to inspect old bridge on Barapullah drain for repairs

New Delhi: Public Works Department (PWD) will do a structural audit of an old bridge over the Barapullah drain that is near the Oberoi flyover.

Over the years, due to vehicle movement, the structure has weakened and needs repairs, officials said.

The department will carry out 3D mapping of the bridge's concrete structure to determine the damage. The mapping

technology will help engineers analyse the internal composition of the concrete structure, particularly focusing on the load-bearing pillars. This advanced technique will provide detailed imagery of the cracks, deterioration and other structural issues that may not be visible during routine inspections. "We have floated a tender for repairs of the old bridge over the Barapullah drain. It is being planned

for repair, and based on the audit report, the cost estimate and further planning will be done," a PWD official said.

The assessment will include testing the strength of the concrete, examining reinforcement conditions, and evaluating the bridge deck's integrity. Engineers will also study the impact of environmental factors such as rain and temperature variations on the structure's stability. **TNN**

Sparate of acquittals leads to call for dedicated cell for MCOCA cases

STEPPING UP THE FIGHT

Dedicated MCOCA cell | Delhi Police is contemplating forming a dedicated cell to handle investigations and prosecutions under Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act

Multidisciplinary team | The cell will not only police officers but also lawyers and chartered accountants to aid in the probe, providing a holistic approach to tackling organised crime

Why the cell? The decision was triggered by a spate of acquittals and a poor conviction rate under MCOCA, highlighting the need for specialised expertise in investigating and prosecuting these cases

Challenges in proving guilt

| Establishing guilt under MCOCA requires proving not only the accused's involvement in crime but also that they have amassed wealth and built a criminal empire, which can be challenging, especially when linking benami properties to the accused

Expected impact | A dedicated cell is expected to improve the conviction rate, providing a much-needed boost to the war against organised crime in Delhi



ACQUITTALS UNDER MCOCA

2024 | Court acquits three brothers accused of running an organised syndicate. The case was registered at Seelampur police station in Aug 2013

2023 | Gangster Neeraj Bawana, booked in 2015, is acquitted as the prosecution fails to prove the case beyond reasonable doubt

2019 | Robbers Vishal Sharma and Varun Kumar are acquitted of MCOCA charges

2016 | Gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari

MCOCA FACTSHEET

MCOCA is aimed at dismantling organised crime syndicates

Its success in Maharashtra led to the Act being extended to Delhi in Jan 2002

First case under MCOCA filed in Delhi on May 6, 2002 against two henchmen of Abu Salem. Both were acquitted

CONVICTIONS
2023 | Four men are convicted of the murder of journalist Soumya Vishwanathan and offences under MCOCA

2019 | Six people are convicted under MCOCA on charges of cheating, forgery, impersonation and criminal conspiracy for cheating a large number of people in several states

2013 | Former BSP candidate Mohammad Afzal alias Haji Afzal is convicted under MCOCA. Over 20 cases of land grabbing, extortion cases are filed against him

MCOCA has been slapped in around 100 cases, 3-4 convictions till date

Rajeshwar Jha

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New Delhi: In what could be a game changer in the war against organised crime, Delhi Police is contemplating forming a dedicated MCOCA cell to handle the investigation and prosecutions under the stringent Act. **TOI** has learnt that this cell will not only have police personnel, but may also comprise lawyers and chartered accountants to aid in the probe. Crime Branch is working on the nitty-gritty, sources said. A spate of acquittals and a poor conviction record under the Act is said to be behind this decision.

"Establishing guilt under MCOCA is not just about people's involvement in crime, but proving that they have amassed wealth and built a criminal empire. Police must prove that the suspects are part of a syndicate and that the money they make from crime goes into building a criminal empire or is invested in property," an officer explained. "But linking benami properties to the accused and the criminal empire is not easy, especially for cops who have no specialisation in economic offences or monetary investigation and this helps the criminals during trial," he added.

Youth killed by teen over verbal abuse: A 25-year-old man was allegedly stabbed to death by a teenager after he allegedly verbally abused him in Bhalwa Dairy, police reported on Friday. The deceased has been identified as Gautam. Police have registered a case under section 103 (murder) of BNS. The cops have identified the offender as Krish(19). **TNN**

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
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Tender ID - 2024_PHE_767359_1 to 13
e-Notice is invited by the Superintending Engineer, Mursidabad Circle, P.H.E Dte, from reputed, bonafide & financially sound agencies having experience in similar nature of work of AIRP of different PWSS Scheme of Munshidabad District under Berhampore Division-P.H.E Dte. Last Bid proposal submission end date is 09/12/2024 up to 02:00 PM. For details, please visit the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, Mursidabad Circle, P.H.E Engineering Dte. ICA- T202487(3)/2024

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

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'Early SC Intervention Would Have Spared Us From Bulldozer Justice'

Nuh Residents Whose Homes, Shops Razed After Riots Still Recovering From Blow

Vishakha Chaman
@timesofindia.com

Gurgaon: "Us time yeh order hota, toh kiski himmat hoti yeh dukane to dhana ki (If this order was issued earlier, who would have dared to raze these shops)," said Arif Khan about the Supreme Court ruling that put an end to "bulldozer justice".

The 36-year-old has been rebuilding his life since the aftermath of the July 31, 2023, riots that erupted during a religious procession in Nuh.

Arif's shop near the SHKM Govt Medical College in Nalhar was among the 1,200 structures that were brought down across 37 sites in Nuh between Aug 3 and Aug 6, days after communal violence killed six in south Haryana.

Today, Arif has reopened his diagnostics centre at the basement of his demolished shop. It isn't brand new, and many more repairs are needed, but it's a start.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday imposed a pan-India ban on instant "bulldozer justice", calling it "totally unconstitutional" that authorities can demolish a citizen's house merely because that person is an accused or even a convict. The bench of justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan laid down a lengthy process for razing illegal properties and warned of contempt proceedings if the norms are not followed.

"The court order brought relief to the underprivileged, giving them the right to a fair trial. The authorities target the weak. This SC order will



Aas Mohammad with his family (above); Arif Khan in front of his diagnostic centre (right)

now act as a deterrent..." Arif told TOI on Thursday.

A few hundred metres from Arif's shop, Aas Mohammad's single-storey house was brought down in Aug 2023. Aas and his brother took the help of a non-profit to rebuild two rooms.

"Had this order come at that time, our houses would have been spared. Supreme Court's judgment is a saviour for the underprivileged like us. It also gives us hope of getting our razed houses authorised," said Aas, who works as a security guard.

Arif, too, said SC's ruling

has given Nuh residents hope that they can consider getting their properties rebuilt after taking necessary permissions from the town and country planning department.

"We can now think of reconstructing these shops after seeking approval from the authorities," Arif said.

The official reason cited for the Nuh demolition drive was to clear encroachments and illegal construction. But several officials, including Nuh Police spokesperson Krishan Kumar and sub-divisional magistrate Ashwini Kumar, had said that the propert-

ies were linked to rioters or those whose rooftops were used for pelting stones at yatris.

The drive also came in the days after Haryana home minister Anil Vij made a controversial statement, saying that bulldozers were part of "ilaaj treatment".

Demolitions were finally halted on Aug 7, when Punjab and Haryana high court took suo-moto cognizance of reports and asked if the action was an act of "ethnic cleansing". The HC recently took cognizance of SC's directions and disposed of the matter.

TOI had reported about

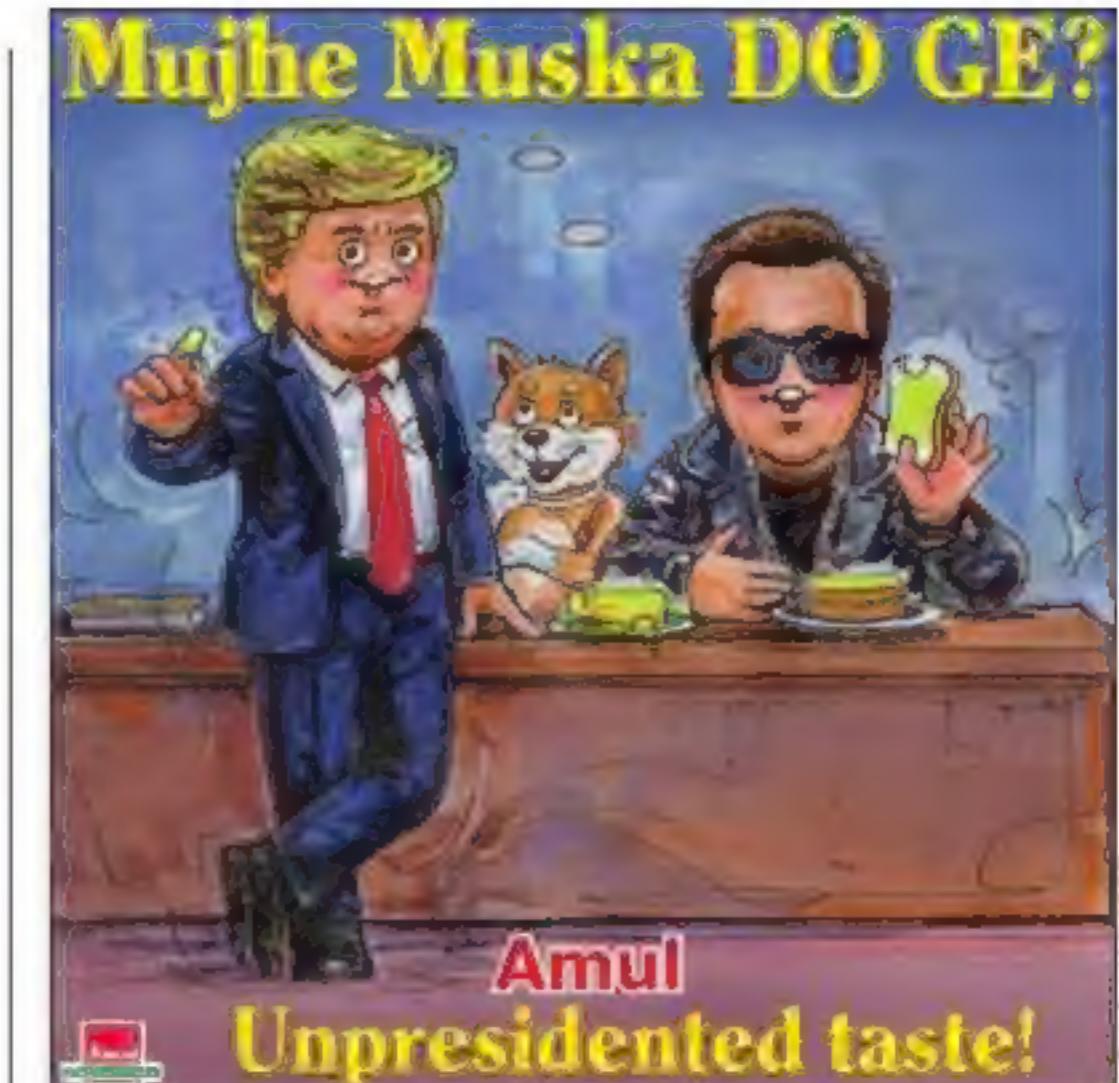
Arif and Aas's families as the south Haryana district marked a year since violence broke out. Among those still struggling was Mohammad Talim (20), who had to convert a 15x15 space that used to be a shop into a parking stall. His income from the shop, which would be Rs 1,500-2,000 on an average day, had plummeted because he could only charge Rs 10 from a commuter who parked there.

Nuh's deputy commissioner Prashant Panwar, who recently took charge of the district, could not be reached for comment till Thursday night.

Man nabbed for murdering wife

New Delhi: A 42-year-old woman was allegedly murdered by her husband in northwest Delhi's Samaypur Badli. He suspected that she was in an illicit relationship with another man. The husband has been arrested. Police said they received a call regarding the incident in Khera Garhi Colony on Thursday. They found the woman lying in a pool of blood with injuries to her face and head. She was taken to a hospital and was declared dead.

The woman was alone at home during the attack. Around 1pm, her children returned from school and found their mother lying on the floor injured. They immediately informed a tenant who informed police. ■■■



daCunha/AB/987

LG asks police to be vigilant on 'illegal immigrants' in city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

legal immigrants on the basis of fake documents.

"These documents are being claimed as citizenship documents by these illegal immigrants. An election identity card, if issued to illegal immigrants, provides them the most powerful right of democracy, i.e., the right to vote in our country," the principal secretary to LG said.

AP alleged that BJP uses the issue of illegal immigrants for political gains. "A thorough investigation should be launched on how illegal immigrants are entering our country. For this, the direct responsibility lies with (Union home minister) Amit Shah and his ministry," the party said in a statement.

The party said if there were illegal immigrants in the capital, it was a "massive failure" of central govt. "On one hand, BJP is granting citizenship to illegal immigrants, and on the other, it is staging a farce of an investigation. BJP must stop this hypocrisy and put a rest to its dirty politics," AAP said.

Ex-Cong MLA Dhingan joins AAP ahead of polls

Ex-AAP MLA goes to Cong

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



New Delhi: Giving a jolt to Congress, former MLA Vir Singh Dhingan joined AAP on Saturday. He was inducted into the party by AAP national convener and former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal.

Dhingan switched to AAP the day the state unit of Congress launched the second leg of Delhi Nyay Yatra from Gokulpur, the constituency bordering Seemapuri, which Dhingan represented thrice in the assembly. The Congress workers participating in the yatra will be staying overnight in Dilshad Garden, which is part of the Seemapuri constituency.

While inducting him into AAP, Kejriwal called Dhingan the "future MLA" from the Seemapuri constituency. A Dalit, Dhingan won three terms as an MLA - 1998, 2003 and 2008 - on a Congress ticket, but lost the three subsequent polls in 2013, 2015 and 2020 to AAP.

Dhingan's defeat in 2015 and 2020 came at the hands of former AAP minister Rajendra Pal Gautam, who joined Congress in Sept this year alleging discrimination against Dalit and minority leaders within AAP.

Congress sources said Dhingan slowly withdrew himself from the Congress activities since then and disconnected from senior party functionaries in the last couple of weeks.

Welcoming Dhingan at a press conference at the party office, Kejriwal said the former legislator was an experienced leader and could be seen as the future MLA of the Seemapuri constituency. "In the Seemapuri assembly, Veer Dhingan has done outstanding work

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Continuing the trend of politicians switching loyalties, former AAP MLA Mohammad Ishaq Khan joined Congress on Friday. He was inducted into the party by Delhi Congress chief Devender Yadav.

Khan won the 2015 assembly polls from Seelampur in 2015. He also held the post of the chairman of Delhi Haj Committee under AAP govt. He jumped ship days after former Congress MLA Mateen Ahmed joined AAP. Sources said Congress may field Khan from Muslim-dominated Seelampur constituency in the upcoming assembly polls, while Ahmed may contest on an AAP ticket.

Addressing a press conference, Yadav said it was a matter of pride for Congress that Khan left AAP to strengthen the Congress. Yadav presented Congress scarf to the newly joined member. "Their presence in the party will motivate the Congress workers to reach out to every citizen of Delhi in the upcoming polls," Yadav said.

Khan said he subscribed to the policies and programmes of Congress party in Delhi and the country and added that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi were working for the "interest" of the people. "Congress is the only party that protects the interest and welfare of the people," Khan said. Former Delhi minister Haroon Yusuf said Khan's decision to join Congress was a "hard blow" to the "communal" forces.

Under Kejriwal's leadership, AAP worked with honesty and dedication for the welfare of the common people and the development of Delhi," he added.

Kejriwal asserted that his party would again form govt in Delhi after the assembly polls in Feb next year. "Delhi stands with us, and we are heading for a massive victory," he said, emphasising the party's appeal based on governance.

More wheels for metro: First train for DMRC Phase IV reaches Delhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



New Delhi: The first metro train of six coaches, procured by Delhi Metro for Phase IV, reached the city on Friday.

This train is compatible with driverless operations. The train has been stationed at the Mukundpur depot, where it will undergo tests required for its statutory certification before use.

This train set was inaugurated on Sept 23 earlier this year in the presence of DMRC and Alstom delegates after the completion of manufacturing of all six cars of the first train set at Alstom's facility at Sircuit, near Chennai.

DMRC will receive 312 coaches (52 trains) for its Phase IV priority corridors — Majlis Park to Maujpur, Janakpuri West to RK Ashram Marg and Tughlakabad to Delhi Aerocity. The trains will reach Delhi in a phased manner.

Of the 312 coaches, 234 are for the extended sections of the Pink Line (Majlis Park to Maujpur) and Magenta Line (Janakpuri West to RK Ashram Marg). The remaining 78 are for the Tughlakabad to

Pink Line will get 90 coaches (15 trains).

"Delhi Metro trains are among the most advanced ones worldwide. The first driverless operations in India started on the Magenta Line in Dec 2020. Subsequently, driverless services were extended on the Pink Line in Nov 2021," Dayal said.

Delhi Metro currently operates on a network of 392.4 km with 288 Metro stations (including the Noida-Greater Noida corridor and the Rapid Metro, Gurgaon) operating with a fleet of about 350 Metro trains with four, six and eight-coach combinations on both broad gauge as well as standard gauge tracks.

As part of its Phase 4 expansion, DMRC is constructing 86 kilometres of new lines across five corridors.

While three corridors — Janakpuri West-RK Ashram Marg, Majlis Park-Maujpur and Aerocity-Tughlakabad — are under construction, the other two new corridors, Lajpat Nagar-Saket-G Block and Indraprastha-Inderlok, are in the pre-tendering stages.

Court acquits 7 in dacoity case after 14 yrs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

three witnesses provided different versions of the same robbery. All three also turned hostile. "It is an established principle of law that if two views are possible, the view favourable to the accused must be accepted. The benefit of doubt must always go to the accused as the prosecution has to prove the case beyond reasonable doubt," the court said in its 51-page verdict dated Nov 11.

The court of additional sessions judge Virender Kumar Kharta said that

The court was hearing the case against the seven men — Joginder, Ashok,

Kapil, Kishan, Mohnish, Dharmender and Deepak Sonkar — against whom Paharganj police had filed a chargesheet under IPC sections 395 (dacoity) and 120B (criminal conspiracy). According to the prosecution, the accused committed a dacoity of Rs 27 lakh on July 2, 2010.

The court noted that the three witnesses, including the victim, stated they could not identify any of the accused because the assailants had worn helmets while committing the offence.

IITF-2024 के

खादी पवेलियन, हॉल सं. - 6

प्रगति मैदान, नई दिल्ली

14 नवंबर 2024 - 27 नवंबर 2024

में आप सादर आमंत्रित हैं

खादी से जुड़कर आत्मनिर्भार और विकसित भारत

बनाने में अपना योगदान दें

VOCAL FOR LOCAL

खादी आयोजित

खादी प्रदर्शनी

खादी पवेलियन, हॉल सं. - 6

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प्रगति मैदान, नई दिल्ली

14 नवंबर 2024 - 27 नवंबर 2024

में आप सादर आमं

Rates of onions start cooling, to fall further in next 2 weeks

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Average retail prices of onions in Delhi have decreased marginally during this week, from Rs 67 a kg on Monday to Rs 63 on Friday, and govt expects the prices to fall further in the next 1-2 weeks with the workforce from Bihar and Jharkhand returning to work at onion producing hubs after the long festive season. Moreover, the supply from Ra-

jasthan, particularly from Alwar, will also increase, officials said.

Meanwhile, govt cooperatives—Nafed and NCCF—have brought 3,170 tonnes of the key kitchen item to Delhi-NCR by three trains in the past 25 days for both retail and wholesale market intervention. "On Nov 12, one train load of onion with 730 tonnes arrived in Delhi and another train carrying 840 tonnes is reaching the capital on

Saturday. The fresh arrivals will be mostly used for retail intervention. We expect the prices to ease quickly in the next 7-10 days," a consumer affairs department official said.

Sources said during the festive season of Diwali and Chhath, most of the migrant workers had returned home and there was huge shortage of labourers in Nasik who are engaged in the sorting of onions. Manual onion sorting is preferred at the wholesale market and in the farms based on different parameters such as size, shape and quality.

Shrikant Mishra, president of Onion Traders Association at Azadpur mandi, said it may take a month or so before prices start easing in the capital. "The prices of onion this year have remained unusually high. Though there was a minor dip last month, the rates have again surged. We hope the prices will start cooling with the arrival of the kharif crop in the next few days," Mishra said.



Workers have returned to onion sorting hubs after the festivals

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Your blessings will continue to guide us.
Your teachings will always inspire us.
Your love will never fade away.
And in our prayers and hearts,
you will live every day.

Deeply remembered by:

Prabha & Vijay Uppal
Sunny & Virender Uppal, Sweety & Viney Uppal
Kiran Uppal

RICHA GROUP OF COMPANIES

REMEMBRANCE SHARING MEMORIES

7th Death Anniversary
SMT PREM LATA

You will always be with us and will be remembered with every breath. Fondly remembered by: Parkash Devi (Mother in-Law), Yash Pal Singh (Husband), Anshita-Yash P. Malik & Ayushi-Anirudh Tanwar (Daughters & Son-in-Laws) Adhiraj (Grand Son), Adhiraj (Grand Daughter), All Relatives & Friends. E-203, Naraina Vihar, New Delhi

In loving memory of
Bobby Dhingra
1.12.1956 - 16.11.2010

"Always missing you Bob. Till we meet. Love you always." Capt. (Late) S.S. Dhingra, Rani Dhingra, Capt. Afzal & Achila Dhingra, Nayab Dhingra, Ritu and Aditya Vij, Diksha and Farid.

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The silent joy of remembering a loved one. The moments you shared together. Little moments that make life beautiful. Share them. With Friends. Relatives. Neighbours. Colleagues. With all those whose lives the departed Soul has touched. Because while life goes on, when you share memories, they stay on forever.

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In loving memory of
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Dear Mummy, You left us on this day but you live every moment in our hearts. Deeply missed & remembered by Mrs. Mukta Mathur (Daughter), Mr. Mukul Mohan Mathur (Son), Prof. Neeta Mathur (Daughter), Dr. Mohit Mohan Mathur (Son), Mr. Pramod Mathur (Son in law), Mrs. Nidhi Mathur (Daughter in law) & all grand children

'Life is an eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil.'
Thus Spake Zarathustra

CINEMA OF THE WEEK

A Real Encounter (Drama) ★★

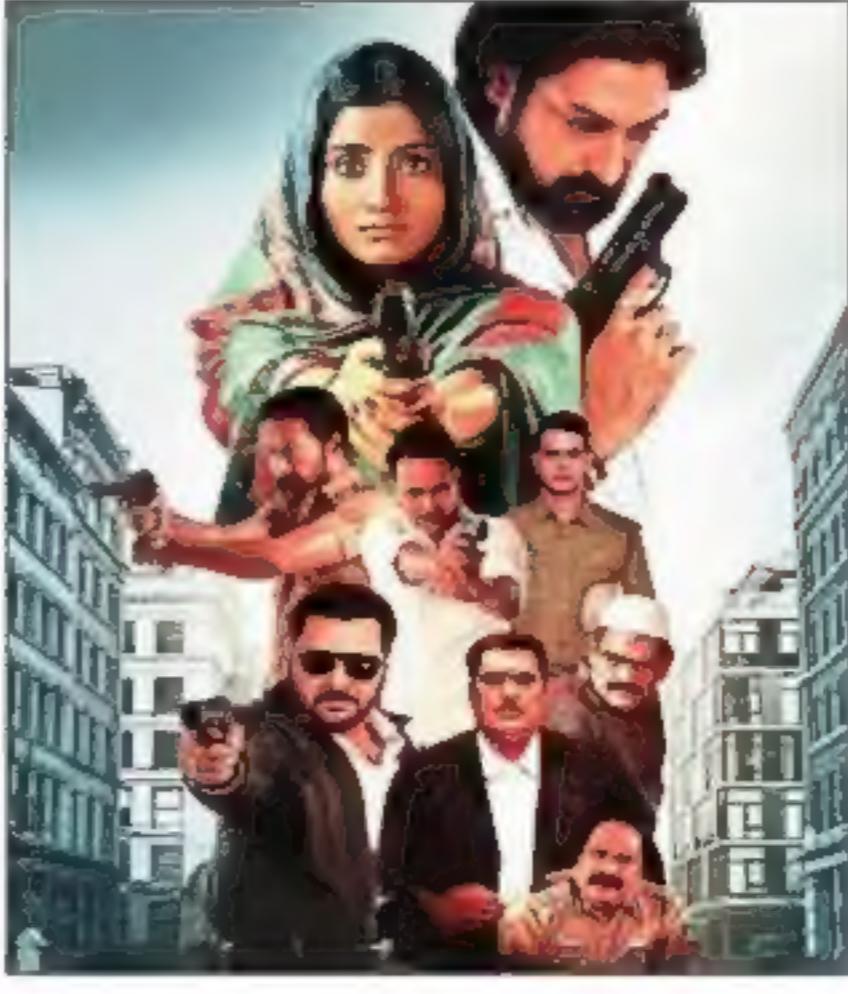
Cast: Shahbaz Khan, Ehsan Khan, Mushtaq Khan, Bratuti Ganguly, Raza Murad
Direction: Sabir Shaikh
Duration: 1 hour 46 minutes
Language: Hindi (UA)

■ A college student gets caught up in a terrorist attack and is killed in a police encounter. Was an innocent soul slain, or is there more than meets the eye?

A Real Encounter attempts to intertwine real-life inspiration with a fictional narrative, drawing from Gujarat's controversial anti-terrorism operations in 2002. The film centers around a dramatic encounter in which four terrorists are killed, including Muskan (Bratuti Ganguly), a seemingly innocent college student from Mumbai. The plot raises the pivotal question: Was Muskan an innocent victim of the circumstance, or was she unknowingly or willingly caught up in a terrorist plot?

The film's premise is intriguing, exploring the blurry line between truth and propaganda surrounding police encounters that often remain shrouded in controversy. The central question about Muskan's involvement has the potential for a nuanced exploration of the socio-political climate of the time. However, the execution leaves much to be desired.

While the film's first half focuses on the intense police encounters, the second half



shifts to a more personal, character-driven narrative about Muskan's gradual descent into radicalism. This shift feels awkward and unconvincing, as the pacing becomes disjointed and struggles to maintain emotional engagement.

Sabir Shaikh's direction lacks the necessary polish to carry the weight of the narrative. There is an overuse of close-up shots and shaky camera work that undermines the intensity of key action sequences. The poorly choreographed gunfights and lack of realism further detract from the dramatic tension.

Additionally, abrupt jump cuts between scenes disrupt the flow, creating a disjointed viewing experience. The background score is another problem—loud and intrusive, it often clashes with the mood of the scenes, further intensifying the discomfort of watching.

Bratuti Ganguly, in her debut role as Muskan, delivers a competent performance but struggles to fully embody her character due to an underdeveloped script. The police officers—Ehsan Khan (ADG Rathore), Shahbaaz Khan (Arjun Ranade), and Rishikesh Tiwari (Varun Barot)—are convincing but are constrained by their lack of complexity. Even Waseem (Akilesh Verma), who befriends Muskan and plays a key role in her involvement with terrorism, follows a predictable character arc that lacks intrigue.

Supporting characters like Muskan's uncle (Mushtaq Khan) and Raza Murad (the advocate seeking justice) are left underdeveloped, overshadowed by the film's uneven pacing. Their presence feels more like an afterthought than integral parts of the narrative.

In conclusion, A Real Encounter is a missed opportunity. While the concept could have made for a thought-provoking and gripping film, the lack of cohesive storytelling, shaky cinematography, and overblown background score detract from its potential. This is definitely not the film you want to encounter this weekend.

— Archika Khurana

To review any movie and check show timings, visit [etimes.in](#)

Gladiator II (Action, Adventure) ★★★

Cast: Pedro Pascal, Paul Mescal, Connie Nielsen, Denzel Washington
Direction: Ridley Scott
Duration: 2 hours 28 minutes
Language: English (UA)

■ In this grand sequel, treachery and revenge script a bloodsoaked chapter of Roman history where a brave slave fights every impossible battle to exact his revenge and outsmart his nemesis.

Twenty-four years is a long time. But the sequel of Ridley Scott's Gladiator II justifies every second of that wait. With a leap forward in time, depth, and cinematic scale, this film transcends the legacy of its iconic predecessor, delivering a fresh, enthralling tale of betrayal, revenge, and raw survival that requires no prior knowledge of the original to be fully immersive.

As the story unfolds, we are instantly thrust into the intensity of ancient Rome through a high-octane battle sequence that introduces us to Lucius (Paul Mescal), a young gladiator played masterfully by Mescal. This is not the Rome of romanticised ancient splendour, but rather a brutal, unforgiving empire ruled by blood-hungry emperors, the sadistic twin siblings Geta (Joseph Quinn) and Caracalla (Fred Hechinger). Lucius, though a slave, wields unrelenting strength and relentless resolve that makes him a true force to be reckoned with in the colosseum—a terrifying but powerful pawn in the hands of his new owner, the crafty Macrinus (Denzel Washington).

Scott's film pulls no punches in portraying the savage, cutthroat environment of ancient Rome, where every brutal fight is a spectacle, a deadly performance to entertain a roaring crowd. The fast-paced plot keeps the viewer glued, as Lucius' path intertwines with that



of Macrinus and his fellow gladiators, and tensions brew beneath the surface. Washington's Macrinus is a cunning manipulator, exuding such effortless charisma and ruthlessness that his presence alone electrifies every scene. His layered portrayal is truly one of the film's strongest assets, straddling that fine line between antagonist and reluctant anti-hero in a way that makes us question whether we despise him or secretly root for his victory.

Mescal's Lucius is far from a mindless warrior. His portrayal combines intensity with a keen awareness of the moral cost of every life taken, making his character a compelling centerpiece. Marcus Acacius (Pedro Pascal), a general shaped by Rome's carnage, brings a nuanced gravitas to the story. Even though Pascal's character was not part of the original narrative, his role here feels as if it was always meant to be, grounding the story's emotional

core with experience and grit. Lucilla (Connie Nielsen) returns as the once-beloved of Maximus, seamlessly bridging the past with the new story. Nielsen embodies wisdom and sorrow, carrying forward the continuity from the first film without overshadowing the present casts.

The visual elements of Gladiator II amplify its epic narrative, from the elaborate costumes to the meticulously recreated colosseum, dripping with blood and resonating with the deafening cheers of a crowd hungry for more. Even with lavish historical settings and grandiose scenes, the story remains tight, avoiding the trap of overly theatrical dramas. Every duel, every charged dialogue, and every twist feels purposeful, designed to deepen our immersion rather than distract from it.

Quinn and Hechinger bring an unnerving energy to their roles as the depraved twin emperors, wielding power with disturbing whimsy and menace. Their unpredictability infuses the film with a palpable tension, painting a vivid picture of Rome's excesses and ruthlessness. These antagonists provide the ideal counterpoint to Lucius's resilience and offer a haunting glimpse into the darkest corners of power and corruption.

Gladiator II is a rare sequel that amplifies the spirit of the original without losing its own unique voice. In an industry often populated by sequels and prequels that feel manufactured or unnecessary, Ridley Scott's Gladiator II emerges as a testament to creative vision and dedication to storytelling. It's not merely a continuation but a revitalisation of the Gladiator saga—a bloody, beautiful homage to the Roman legacy that remains both timeless and thrillingly relevant. It's the showcase of a maverick director's immense talent and conviction in a historic story that is bound to script cinematic history, all over again.

— Ronak Kotecha

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ABOVE AVERAGE ★★★★ |

MASTERPIECE ★★★★★ |

Man murdered in Samaypur Badli, 2 juveniles held

New Delhi: A 35-year old man was allegedly murdered by sons and brother of two women whom he allegedly was in a relationship with in Samaypur Badli. Cops said they received information on Friday regarding a body lying in the park. A team from the local police station rushed to the spot and took the body to a hospital. The deceased was later identified as Chandan Jha. Police have apprehended two juveniles in this connection. TNN

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DDA told to pay for man's death in balcony collapse

Abhinav Garg
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has told DDA to pay a compensation of over Rs 11 lakh to the family of a man who in 2001 fell and died after the balcony of his DDA flat collapsed.

The court said it was "clear that DDA's negligence was the direct cause for the balcony collapse". It said that there was no evidence to suggest that the now "deceased or his family took any deliberate action that could have contributed to seepage or dampness", grounds that DDA cited as causes for the balcony collapse. "On the contrary, it is probable that they used the balcony in the ordinary course of daily life," Justice Dharmesh Sharma said in a recent order. It asked DDA, the land-owning agency for the project, to pay over Rs 11 lakh to the man's widow and her sons, at the rate of 6% per annum from the date of filing of the present writ petition in Jan 2001.

The court pointed out that despite repeated complaints by the man and other residents, DDA refused to act and repair the damage instead blaming seepage and dampness. The family was living in a second-floor apartment of the multi-story project developed by DDA for low and medium-income groups in Jhilmil Colony. The petitioners alleged that the construction of the flats was of substandard quality. Its plaster had peeled off within five to six years of

construction.

Brushing aside DDA's defence that it was under no obligation to maintain the flat after selling it off, the high court underlined that "DDA had a continuing obligation to ensure the infrastructure's durability and longevity post-allotment. The facts of this case unequivocally demonstrate that latent construction defects, which should have been addressed timely, were the root cause. DDA was responsible for rectifying these defects, either directly or through its agencies," the court said.

The court also took adverse inference of DDA's refusal to furnish the file containing its inspection reports of the collapsed property, despite repeated orders by the high court during the hearing of the plea, which was filed in 2001.

It said that DDA's argument — that the incident occurred almost 12 years after the handing over of the flat — "cuts no ice."

DDA cited an internal report of its engineers to deny liability, but the court termed it "clearly self-serving, one-sided and a complete eye-wash". It pointed out that merely because other balconies were found intact, it "does not imply that was well with the superstructure of the balcony that collapsed. By all means, DDA was accountable for the quality, strength and lifespan of the balcony's superstructure. The excuse that seepage or leakage caused the damage remains unsubstantiated, as no expert validated the finding," the court said.

CVC asks CPWD to look into complaint over CM's bungalow

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Taking cognisance of a complaint by BJP MLA Vijender Gupta about alleged extravagant expenditure incurred on interior decoration and amenities at 6, Flagstaff Road, Central Vigilance Commission has asked Central Public Works Department to examine it. The bungalow was occupied by AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal when he was the chief minister. AAP responded by saying that BJP-led central govt was free to conduct any investigation and that Kejriwal and the entire party were "staunchly honest".

In his complaint to CVC, Gupta, the leader of the opposition in the Delhi Assembly, alleged that there were blatant violations of rules in the renovation and construction of the bungalow. "Such exaggerated expenditure on these items smacks of high-level corruption by govt and requires immediate investigation," Gupta stated in his complaint. AAP claimed it was because of their "unwavering honesty" that Kejriwal was the "most popularly elected" CM ever in the country. It added that BJP launched several investigations against AAP govt and its ministers and functionaries but failed to uncover "a single rupee of wrongdoing". "Instead of engaging in negative politics, BJP should focus on understanding people's problems and working towards real solutions," the party stated.

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DISPELLING THE DARKNESS



Devotees light candles at Gurdwara Bangla Sahib on the 555th Parkash Purab of Guru Nanak Dev

Man murdered by neighbour

New Delhi: A 42-year-old man was murdered after he objected to the abusive behaviour of his neighbour in the Bhalswa Dairy area on Wednesday. Police have arrested the accused.

The accused, identified as Dheeraj, first attacked the man with an iron rod on the head and then pushed him, causing the neighbour to fall down the stairs.

Police received a PCR call on Wednesday. The caller informed them that a neighbour attacked his uncle on the head with a stick and pushed him from the stairs, resulting in his death. Upon reaching the spot, the police identified the deceased as Ram Singh. The victim's family told the police that the accused, Dheeraj, used to abuse and beat his wife. The police registered a murder case against the accused and arrested him after conducting raids at his possible hideouts. TNH

Help for homebuyers: SC seeks details of delayed projects in NCR

AmitAnand.Choudhary

@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Supreme Court has sought details of delayed housing projects in NCR where homebuyers, who took loans under subvention plan to fund their dream homes, are being harassed by financial institutions because of developers not completing the project and also for not paying EMI to banks as per the agreement.

Under the subvention scheme, banks disburse the sanctioned amount directly to the accounts of the builders, who were then to pay EMIs on the sanctioned loan amount, until possession of the flats are handed over to the homebuyers. As builders started defaulting in paying the EMIs to the banks as per the Tripartite Agreement, the banks initiated action against the buyers to recover the EMIs instead.

As hundreds of homebuyers approached the court against banks for taking coercive action against them for default in paying EMIs, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan decided to take a comprehensive look at the problem to explore ways to

resolve the issue. The bench sought all details regarding payment made by builders and buyers to the banks, status of the project and the proceedings going on against default builders in different forums including under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The bench directed petitioners homebuyers, builders and banks to furnish these information regarding different projects—(i) The status and details of payments made by builders to banks or payments by the homebuyers to banks/ builders, (ii) The date of offering possession where the project is stated to have been completed, (iii) The current status of completion of the project (iv) The status of recovery from the homebuyers, (v) The amenities advertised by the builders at the time of launching projects and the status re: completion thereof, (vi) The status as to whether the builder-cum-developers has undergone CIRP (under IBC) or any other coercive or non-coercive recovery procedure, and the stage of such proceedings, (vii) Whether the home-buyers received any relief from the statutory authorities like Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RE-

RA). If so, the details of such orders be also furnished.

The bench had earlier granted relief to the homebuyers and directed that no coercive action be taken against them by banks or builders regarding payment of EMI and no complaint should be entertained against them for cheque bounce cases. A large number of homebuyers had approached Delhi High Court which had in 2023 refused to grant them relief, saying that there were alternate remedies available to them and they thereafter knocked the doors of the apex court. One batch of the homebuyers, represented by advocate Anshul Gupta, submitted that they were victims of illegal disbursal of loan by the bank directly to the account of the builder in violation of RBI guidelines, which

are statutory in nature.

"This is the classic case where one rich man (bank/financial institutions) gave money to another rich man (builder). The rich man who received the money (builder) ran away with it without fulfilling his obligations. The rich man who gave the money (bank/financial institutions), disbursed it in violation of the law of the land. The poor man (homebuyer) is now made a victim and is pushed into litigation by the bank when he has not received a single rupee. And is deprived of his dream home," a petition, filed by advocate Gupta, said. They alleged the main violation was that the banks disbursed the amount directly to the builder without linking it to the stages of construction in gross violation of RBI circulars as well as National Housing Bank guidelines.



गोदा द्वारा विनाक 26.10.2024 को औद्योगिक नूतनियों के अवधन हेतु प्रकाशित विज्ञापन में, "आप-लाइन" आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अनिम सिविल 17.11.2024 निर्धारित है, जिसे आगे बढ़ाकर दिनांक 19.11.2024 किया जाता है।
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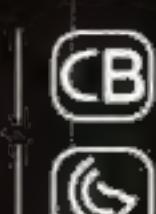
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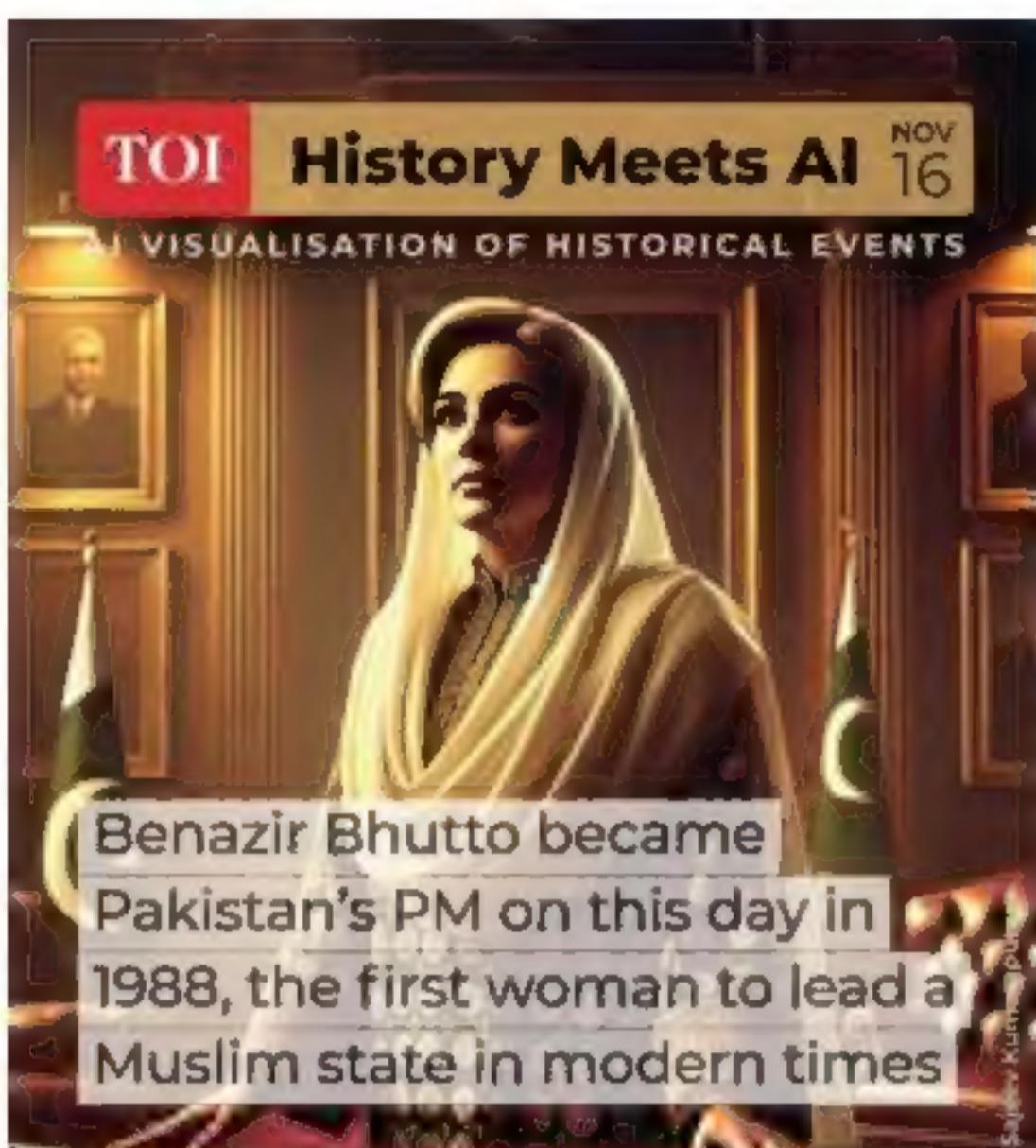
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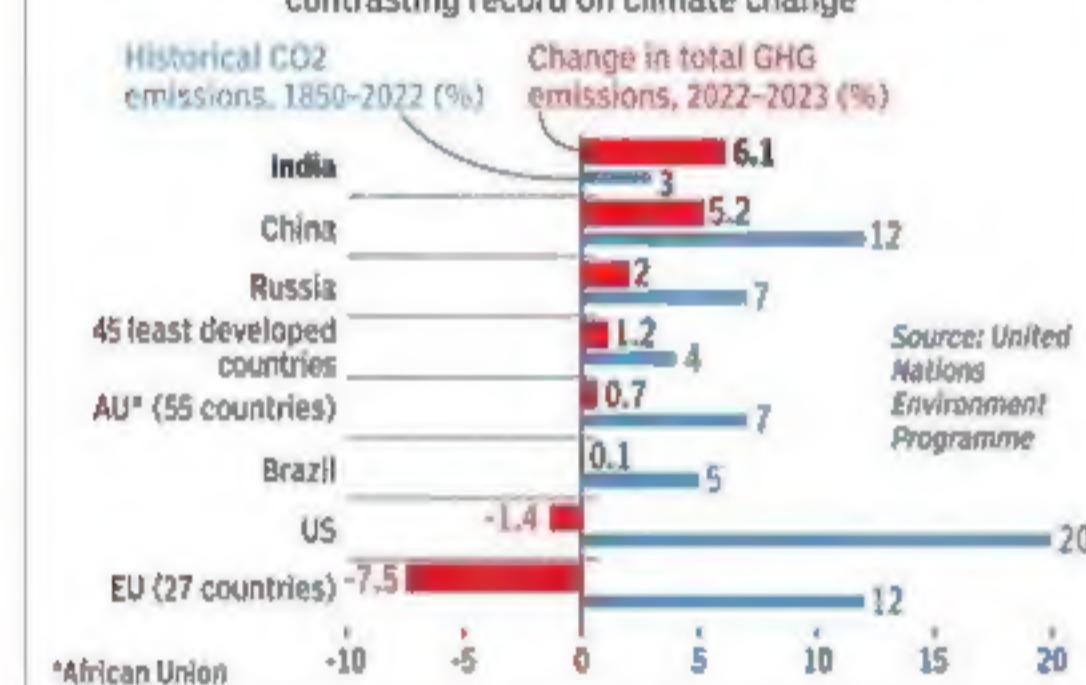
Tigress hit by train, critically injured
 An adult tigress, presumably from Nakadongri forest range in Maharashtra's Bhandara district, was critically injured after it was hit by a train near Dongri railway station Friday, reports Vijay Pinjarkar. The tigress sustained critical injuries to its head, hind legs, and its tail got severed. The animal made attempts to move but due to internal and external injuries, collapsed on the tracks.

The tigress was rescued after seven hours by the forest department. One of the reasons for the delay was people taking selfies with the injured animal. Deputy conservator of forests Raul Gavai said, "Our staff reached the spot but could not launch rescue operation for want of a rapid rescue team, vehicles, equipment, and veterinarians." Veterinarian Dr Vithal Hatwar said, "We had to procure reversal drug externally, hence the delay."

STA STICS A slice of life in numbers

CLEAN PAST, 'DIRTY' FUTURE VS 'DIRTY' PAST, CLEAN FUTURE

Historically, India's share in global emissions has been minuscule. But it recorded the sharpest rise in greenhouse gas emissions in 2023 over the previous year. There are countries that have a contrasting record on climate change



Nepal's power starts flowing to B'desh through Indian grid

Tripartite Agreement A Major Boost For Regional Energy Connectivity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India joined Nepal and Bangladesh in inaugurating the first trilateral power transaction — from Nepal to Bangladesh through the Indian grid — in a major boost for energy connectivity in the region. With both Nepal and Bangladesh keen on long-term electricity trade, India had signed tripartite agreement last month with the two countries to facilitate cross-border supply using an Indian transmission line.

Describing the inauguration as a historic occasion, the Indian govt said the start of this power flow is expected to boost sub-regional connectivity in the power sector.

India had announced its decision to facilitate the trilateral power transaction through the Indian grid with an export of up to 40 MW of power



The supply is particularly important for Bangladesh as it grapples with continued power shortages. The agreement was inked last month

during the visit of former Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' to India in June 2023. "During the visit, both sides had expressed their commitment towards greater sub-regional cooperation, including in the energy sector, which would lead to increased interlinkages between the economies for mutual benefit of all stakeholders," said the MEA.

Union minister for power

Manohar Lal inaugurated the electricity flow along with Bangladeshi energy adviser Fouzul Kabir Khan and Nepali energy minister Dipak Khadka through a virtual event hosted by Nepal govt.

"This historic occasion marks the first trilateral power transaction which has been carried out through the Indian grid," govt said. The agreement between NTPC Vidyut

ED finds ₹8.8cr at Chennai office of lottery king Santiago Martin

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: ED has recovered Rs 8.8 crore from the Chennai office of Santiago Martin, better known as the lottery king, during searches on Thursday in a money laundering case against him and other associates for illegal gains of more than Rs 900 crore made in distribution and sale of lotteries.

The searches were carried out at more than 20 premises of the accused and his family members in Chennai and Coimbatore and at other associates in Faridabad, Ludhiana and Kolkata



ED on Thursday searched over 20 premises of the accused, his family members and other aides in a money laundering case

to look into the 'proceeds of crime' generated from illegal distribution and sale of lotteries in several states.

Martin and his Future

Gaming and Hotel Services (P) Ltd are accused of committing fraud in distribution of Sikkim state lotteries. ED had earlier carried out searches on Martin and associates in May last year when it had seized assets worth over Rs 457 crore, including Rs 158 crore in fixed deposits and mutual funds, and Rs 299 crore worth of properties.

The probe against Martin, who is India's biggest political donor having contributed Rs 1,368 crore through electoral bonds to all parties including DMK, comes weeks after Madras high court validated ED's case under the PMLA.

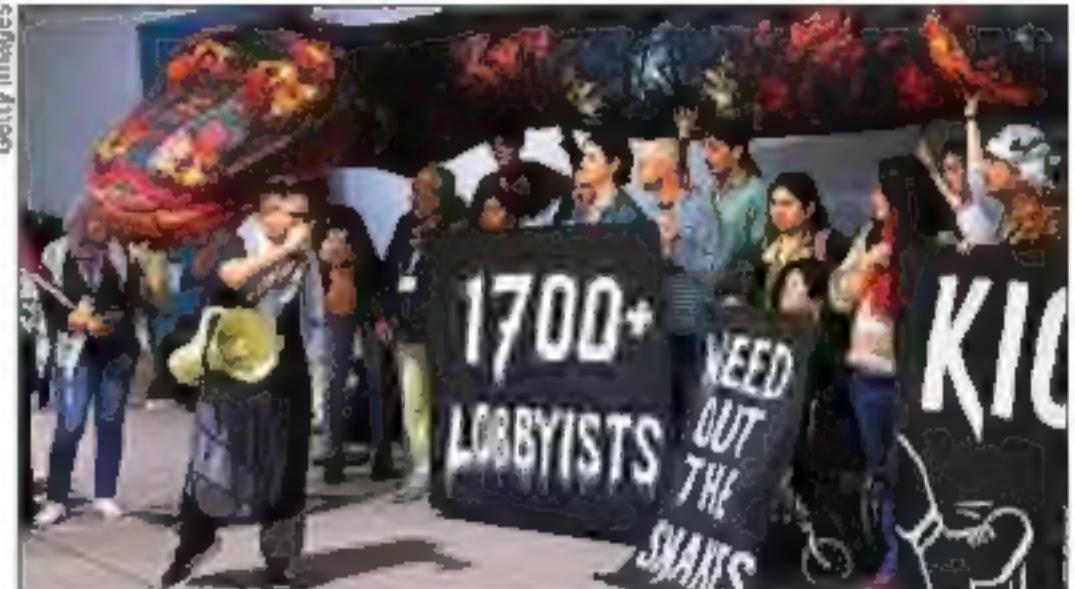
After protest, UP reschedules PCS exam to Dec 22

Prayagraj: Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPPSC) has rescheduled this year's PCS (preliminary) exam to Dec 22 following protests by aspirants, reports Kapil Dixit. It was earlier scheduled for Dec 7 and 8.

The exam will now be held in two shifts — from 9.30am to 11.30am and 2.30pm to 4.30pm. The change aims to ease travel and scheduling issues for candidates and enable them to complete the exam in one day.

Aspirants protesting against UPPSC since Monday have called off their stir. The exam was rescheduled following CM Adityanath's intervention.

Over 1,700 lobbyists for fossil fuels given access to COP29



Activists protest with an effigy of a snake against participation of fossil fuel lobbyists at the UN COP29 climate summit in Baku Friday

Baku: Over 1,700 fossil fuel — oil, gas and coal — "lobbyists" have been granted access to COP29, and their number is more than almost every country delegation at the UN climate conference here, according to an analysis released on Friday. Data showed that lobbyists with 1,773 registered participants are only outnumbered by delegations of host Azerbaijan (2,229), COP30 host Brazil (1,914), and Türkiye (1,872).

The list of lobbyists includes 24 from India as well. Among Indians, most (17)

Polluters Out (KBPO), which is a coalition of more than 450 global organisations united in demanding an end to the ability of big polluters to write the rules of climate action. "The lobby's grip on climate negotiations is like a venomous snake coiling around the very future of our planet. We must expose their deceit and take decisive action to remove their influence and make them pay for their infractions towards our planet. It's time to prioritise voices of those who have been fighting for justice and sustainability, not the interests of polluters," said KBPO member Nnimmo Bassey.

A vast number of lobbyists were granted access to COP as part of a trade association. India's Ficci with 17 members is at number three after International Emissaries Trading Association (43) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (27) in the list of top 10 biggest trade associations in attendance, representing the fossil fuel industry. Eight of the top 10 groups with the most lobbyists came from Global North.

Last year's analysis showed that an historic high of over 2,450 lobbyists were granted access to COP28 in Dubai, up from 836 the year before that in Egypt.

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Birsa Munda denied due in bid to glorify Nehru, descendants: Modi

Shah: Was First To Champion Tribals' Rights

Madan.Kumar@timesofindia.com

Patna/New Delhi: Modi govt's effort to canonise Birsa Munda, who valiantly stood up to British might, as a national icon has gathered momentum, with PM Modi regretting the failure to acknowledge the heroic fight the legendary tribal warrior put up against the colonial rulers.

"As we celebrate Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, it is important to understand why this event is necessary. It is an honest effort to correct a great injustice in history. The contribution of the tribal community was not given the recognition in history it deserved after independence," the PM said while addressing a function in Bihar's Jamui which is close to the border of the Santhal Pargana region of Jharkhand to which Birsa Munda belonged.



PM Narendra Modi and Bihar CM Nitish Kumar in Jamui. The PM launched projects worth over Rs 6,000cr during Janjatiya Gaurav Divas on Friday

Modi govt has decided to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of the tribal hero as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas and PM marked the day by inaugurating and laying foundation of projects worth Rs 6,000 crore.

The day also saw home minister Amit Shah unveiling a statue of Birsa Munda at the intersection at Sarai Kale Khan ISBT in Delhi which has been named after the leader of 'Ulgulan', the great tumult, that challenged the British.

Modi blamed neglect of Munda and other tribal leaders who were part of the anti-colonial struggle to the effort

to glorify the first PM Jawaharlal Nehru and his descendants to exclusion of others. "The effort was that members of one party and one family got credit," Modi said, without mentioning any names.

"The tribal community is the one that led centuries-long fight to protect Bharat's culture and freedom. However, following Independence, attempts were made to erase this contribution from tribal history, driven by selfish policies to give credit for Bharat's freedom solely to one party. But if only one family secured Independence, then why did

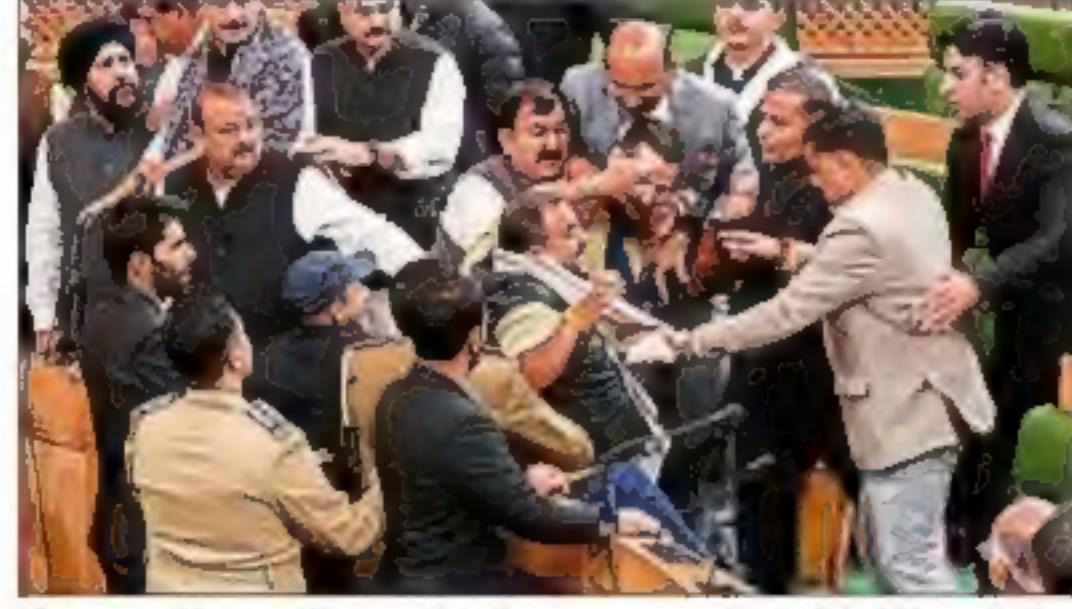
Shah added that Munda was the first one to champion the primacy of tribals' claims on resources — jai, jungle, Jameen (water, forests, land) — in their traditional lands.

Kharge's reply to BJP's attack on Art 370 backfires, draws angry reaction from NC

Saleem.Pandit@timesofindia.com

Srinagar: AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge's potshots at BJP brass for "raking up" Article 370 backfired Friday on his party's alliance with National Conference in J&K, with Srinagar MP Aga Ruhullah Mehdi saying "no INC president or JKPPC president has a right to misinterpret the resolution" passed by the assembly to restore the region's special status.

This resolution calls for the return of all the guarantees in their original shape and form, as operational before 1953, including Art 370 and 35A. Let alone JKPPC or any other entity, even if anyone from within @JKNC tries to misinterpret the resolution... (they) will be rejected and pushed by the people to a corner of irrelevance, as the allies of BJP were in the last election," Mehdi wrote on X.



J&K assembly recently saw chaotic scenes over the Article 370 resolution

The NC MP's outburst at Kharge's remarks about BJP "keeping alive the issue of Article 370" coincided with J&K PCC chief Tariq Hameed Karra telling reporters in Srinagar that the Nov 6 assembly resolution doesn't even mention the abrogated constitutional provision, let alone seek its reinstatement.

"(Home minister) Shah, in poll rallies, accuses Congress of spreading lies. He is saying Congress wants to bring back Article 370 (in J&K). Tell me, who said that and when?" Kharge said on Thursday at a press conference in Pune.

"If it (the motion to abrogate Article 370) has been passed in Parliament, why are you raking up the issue again? If you want to say this, go to Kashmir and say it. Elections are over in Kashmir."

Mehdi said the purpose of new J&K assembly's resolution was to express people's disapproval of all amendments and allegedly unconstitutional abrogation of the "guaranteed (special) status of J&K" from 1953 till 2019.

Democratic Progressive Azad Party's Salman Nizami said jousting between Congress and BJP over Article 370 had exposed the fault lines in the grand old party's alliance with NC. "Both Congress and BJP call Article 370 a closed chapter, yet your party is in alliance with Congress and gifts shawls to BJP to keep both in good humour," he said, addressing Mehdi.

State Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra clarified his party, which decided not to join the coalition govt till J&K's statehood was restored, said there should be no ambiguity about the purpose of the assembly resolution.

700 kg of meth worth ₹3,000cr seized from boat off Gujarat coast

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad/New Delhi: Narcotics Control Bureau, Delhi, Indian Navy and Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) seized 700 kg of methamphetamine — worth between Rs 1,500 crore and Rs 3,000 crore — from a foreign boat in a joint operation off the Porbandar coast, officials said on Friday. Separately, NCB seized 82.5 kg of cocaine, worth around Rs 900 crore, in Delhi.

"The back-to-back major breakthroughs against illegal drugs in a single day demonstrate the Modi govt's unwavering resolve to build a drug-free Bharat," Union home minister Amit Shah posted on X. He added that the New Delhi consignment of cocaine was seized using a "bottom-to-top approach" and that the fight against drugs would "continue ruthlessly".

"A huge consignment of about 700 kg of methamphetamine was interdicted in Indian territorial waters. During this operation eight foreign nationals, who claimed to be Iranians, were arrested," NCB said. The eight men had no identity documents, NCB said.

According to NCB officials, there is no standard method to calculate the value of drugs as it varies as per volume, quality, region, as well as demand and supply. However, according to rough estimates, international street prices of meth, a synthetic recreational variety of narcotics, could be anywhere between Rs 2 crore and Rs 5 crore per kg. Accordingly, the price of the seized meth could be estimated to be anywhere between Rs 1,500 crore and Rs 3,500 crore.

NCB said an operation codenamed "Sagar Manthan-4", based on intelligence inputs, was launched to intercept an unregistered vessel — without an automatic identification system or an electronic boat or ship-tracking indicator — that entered Indian waters with drugs. The suspect vessel was identified and interdicted by Navy and the seizure of the drugs and arrests took place Friday, it added.

Investigations are underway to uncover the origin of the drug shipment, intended recipients, and the broader network of the assembly resolution.

Bodies of woman, 2 kids found in Manipur river

Prabin.Kalita@timesofindia.com

Guwahati: Bodies of a woman and two children were found floating in the Barak river at Jiribam in Manipur's conflict-ridden Jiribam Friday, raising fears that these could be of three of the six missing inmates of a camp for the displaced near which security forces killed 10 Hmar "militants" on Nov 11.

A security official said the bodies, spotted by residents of the area, were retrieved and sent to Silchar Medical College and Hospital in neighbouring south Assam for autopsy and identification.

"We cannot confirm if the three bodies are of those among the three women and as many children reported missing for five days. We have to wait for the autopsy findings," the official said.

Those reported missing are a 25-year-old woman and her eight-month-old daughter and two-year-old son, a 31-year-old woman and her eight-year-old daughter, and a 60-year-old woman.

Manipur Police said two senior officers were stationed in Jiribam and Borobekra to

Protests intensify over killing of 10 'militants'

Guwahati: The backlash against Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Manipur Police over the Nov 11 Jiribam gunfight in which 10 "armed militants" died spilled over to Churachandpur on Friday — marked by street protests, petitions to Union home minister Amit Shah and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and a campaign for a judicial inquiry.

Hundreds joined Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights in a demonstration at Kotie ground in the district HQ from 11am, raising slogans against CRPF and holding placards demanding justice for the families of the slain men, reports Prabin Kalita.

Kuki-Zo civil groups say the deceased were tribal "volunteers" safeguarding villages and civilians from attacks by valley-based intruders, some of whom allegedly raped and inflicted "third-degree" torture on a 31-year-old mother of three before burning her to death at Zairawn in Jiribam on Nov 7. Kuki Students' Organisation vice president Minlal Gangte urged the gathering to commit themselves to the quest for justice in front of the "Wall of Remembrance", a memorial to people from the tribal community who died in the ethnic violence since May 2023. Memorandums addressed to NHRC and home minister Shah were handed to the additional deputy commissioner Seiminhang Lenthang.

supervise and coordinate operations by multiple teams to trace the six missing people.

Amid all this, inspector Sagapam Ibotombi Singh, officer-in-charge of Jiribam police station, submitted his resignation to the DGP, citing "unavoidable circumstances of my family and other reasons". He was transferred out immediately, sources said.

Singh, a recipient of the

President's Medal for Gallantry on two occasions, was leading the police team that joined CRPF in the counteroffensive following an attack on two posts of the paramilitary force. The Kuki-Zo community insists that the 10 "militants" killed in retaliatory gunfire were Hmar "volunteers" safeguarding their villages from attacks by intruders.

Mutton mayhem: BJP MP's feast turns chaotic over missing meat

Rajeev.Dikshit@timesofindia.com



Varanasi: A feast hosted by BJP's Bhadohi MP Vinod Kumar Bind at his office in Mirzapur's Karsada turned into a battleground as guests who were allegedly served mutton gravy without any meat pieces created a ruckus.

They even slapped the youth serving the mutton, leading to an unruly scene that lasted several minutes, until senior BJP members and locals intervened.

A video clip of people leaving the feast venue with food packets and the injured youth heading towards his motorcycle was widely circulated on social media.

According to reports, a youth had joined the "pangat" (guests sitting and dining on the ground in a row). He

Later, when reporters contacted the MP at a public meeting of UP CM Yogi Adityanath in the district's Majhawan area on Friday to enquire about the party being held despite the model code of conduct being in place, Bind refused to comment.

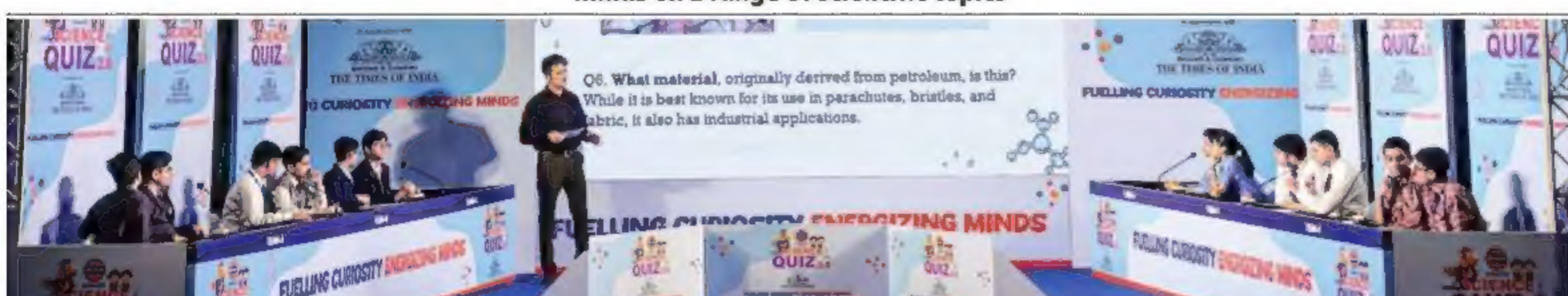
Umashankar Bind, who looks after the MP's office, said, "As maximum invitees had consumed food, preparations were being made to wind up the feast after 8.30pm. In the meantime, some youths who had been consuming liquor at a country liquor shop entered the venue, which was restricted to limited invitees." The same youth caused disturbance and fled the scene, he added. According to him, the whereabouts of those youths could not be ascertained from people present at the office.

Science Quiz 2.0

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

Brilliance on display with young students in a knowledge face-off

With students from 150 schools, this year's IndianOil Science Quiz 2.0 in association with The Times of India challenged young minds on a range of scientific topics



Response.Mumbai@timesofindia.com

Science embodies a thirst for knowledge and curiosity that seeks to answer some of the greatest questions in our environment. As a subject, it sparks curiosity in learners as young as four or five. From the wonders of plants and animals to why a slice of buttered toast often lands butter-side down, or how mobile screens can now curve, bend, open out, or fold inwards—the very fabric of everything around us, visible and invisible—science is all this and more. It invites us to explore, teases us to peek, and then draws us down a rabbit hole into a wonderland of discovery.

While some of us may later choose careers in languages, arts, business, finance or countless other fields, the enduring legacy of science stays with us, no matter what we go on to do in life. If we view the world in the spirit of a wide-eyed explorer—discovering, analysing, inferring—science instils in us a way of seeing life, addressing problems and approaching situations with a scientific temperament that shapes how we navigate the world, conduct research, and find solutions.

The IndianOil Science Quiz, first

conducted in 2023-24 in association with The Times of India, was conceptualised to inspire a scientific appetite among school children in classes seven, eight and nine, encouraging them to develop a scientific mindset and make informed choices about their academic future.

After the great success of its first year and in response to demand from students across India, the series expanded to eight quizzes.

From the wonders of plants and animals to why a slice of buttered toast often lands butter-side down, or how mobile screens can now curve, bend, open out, or fold inwards—the very fabric of everything around us, visible and invisible—science is all this and more. It invites us to explore, teases us to peek, and then draws us down a rabbit hole into a wonderland of discovery.

After a highly competitive preliminary written round with narrow margins among the top eight teams, the following six teams made it to the stage final:

1. Air Force Bal Bharti School
2. Amity International School, Pushp Vihar

3. Blue Bells Model School
4. Maxfort School, Paschim Vihar

5. Sarla Chopra DAV Public School, Noida
6. Tagore International School, Vasant Vihar

These schools battled it out for the title of city champions. The Architect of Questions Kunal

Savarkar quizzed the participants on a host of topics, ranging from the usual suspects of physics, chemistry and biology to geology, environment, safety, sustainability, technology and astronomy, all viewed through the lens of scientific enquiry.

Commenting on the participation and performance, Savarkar says, "Teams from across Delhi-NCR demonstrated high levels of knowledge, with the high scores reflecting India's growing interest in science." Seema Chari, content curator and author, adds, "Students rose to the challenge of answering and solving multifaceted questions, showcasing the next generation's talent."

The final stage was a multimedia extravaganza, with different rounds challenging students' awareness as well as their ability to connect the dots. The quiz went down to the wire, with all teams in the fray until the last round.

At the end of the buzzer round, the team comprising Vansh Bajaj and Pranjal Sharma of Sarla Chopra DAV Public School, Noida, emerged as worthy winners. Dakshika Yadav and Kavya Kalash from Air Force Bal Bharti School and M. Vasanth and Vihaan Swarankar from Tagore International School, Vasant Vihar, were declared first and second runners-up respectively. The winners received a trophy, certificates of merit and cash prizes totalling Rs two lakh. The runners-up school received a trophy and certificates,

in addition to Rs one lakh, whilst the second runners-up were awarded Rs 45,000, along with trophies and certificates of merit. Uniquely, the mentor teachers were recognised with a certificate of appreciation, and those from the three winning schools received a cash prize of Rs 25,000 each.

Manoj Kumar Gupta, executive director and state head, Delhi and Haryana State Office of Indian Oil Corporation Limited, congratulated the students on their performances and praised their deep knowledge of science. Whilst emphasising IndianOil's commitment to furthering India's progress, Gupta encouraged students to aspire to be their best, adding that he hoped some of them would pursue careers in science.

The IndianOil Science Quiz is a rigorous format that tests students across a vast range of scientific subjects, including physics, chemistry, medicine, information technology, environment studies, and space science. The event is being held across eight cities: New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, which includes four new cities, Lucknow, Guwahati, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad.



PROPERTY FOCUS

TIMES interact
Connecting People, Connecting Needs.

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

Jadav.Kakoti
@timesofindia.com

The attraction of ultra-luxury homes has always been there among the homebuyers. Of late, there has been a significant rise in demand for such ultra-luxury homes in the entire NCR. Commenting on the trend, Shalin Raina, managing director (residential services) of a real estate consultant firm, elaborates, "Over the past year, a significant rise in demand for high-end and luxury properties has emerged at both national and local levels. This shift reflects a change in homebuyers' growing desire to invest in a place not only to live but as a high-quality asset that reflects their lifestyle aspirations. Furthermore, the demand for larger, more luxurious homes has attracted established developers with the capital and expertise to deliver premium, customized living spaces that cater to the aspirations of modern India. This trend has led to a surge in launches by established developers, significantly increasing their year-on-year contribution to the residential market. We expect this momentum to continue throughout the coming fiscal year (FY 2024-25) as well."

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

BK Malagi, COO of a real estate firm, says, "The market for luxury real estate is always changing to satisfy consumers' demands for a more upscale lifestyle. There is evidence of a rise in the next generation's desire for opulent residences. Urbanisation, exposure to global living standards, and greater income levels

are the causes of this. This generation is more likely to choose opulent home designs with the latest amenities, unique experiences, safety, and well-being. These modern buyers are spending a lot of money to buy the residences of their dreams." He further adds, "A shift has occurred in the dynamic geography of work culture, bringing in an era of remote work and adaptable ways of living. As a result, discriminating purchasers favour opulent residences that radiate elegance while also providing the usefulness of assigned offices and roomy living spaces that promote both work



LUXURY ABODES catch buyers' fancy

The demand for bigger and more spacious homes has seen a significant rise during the last couple of years in NCR

and leisure." NCR's opulent mansions entice buyers with promises of enjoyment and leisure. Every aspect of these homes, from lavish interiors that evoke a feeling of majesty to expansive gardens that provide a quiet haven, is painstakingly designed to satisfy the discriminating tastes of the elite.

Prestigious NCR locales with luxurious residences are especially in demand. This is so because they provide seclusion, exclusivity, and easy access to important monuments. Many purchasers consider luxury properties as long-term invest-

ments in the NCR, expecting property values to increase over time.

Developers also echo similar views. Amit Modi, director of another realty company, says, "In the past three years, the luxury real estate sector in the NCR has experienced expo-

prestige but also attractive investment instruments. Nayan Raheja, a leading developer, says, "Gurgaon, especially areas like Dwarka Expressway, Southern Peripheral Road, and New Gurgaon have emerged as a sought-after destination."

G Venkat Naveen Gadde, founder and managing director of a realty firm, says, "There are multiple

apartments. The rapidly growing economy has had a positive impact on the income of people. The burgeoning middle class holds stronger aspirations and higher purchasing power. This economically stronger middle class is looking for quality, facilities and aesthetics while choosing homes

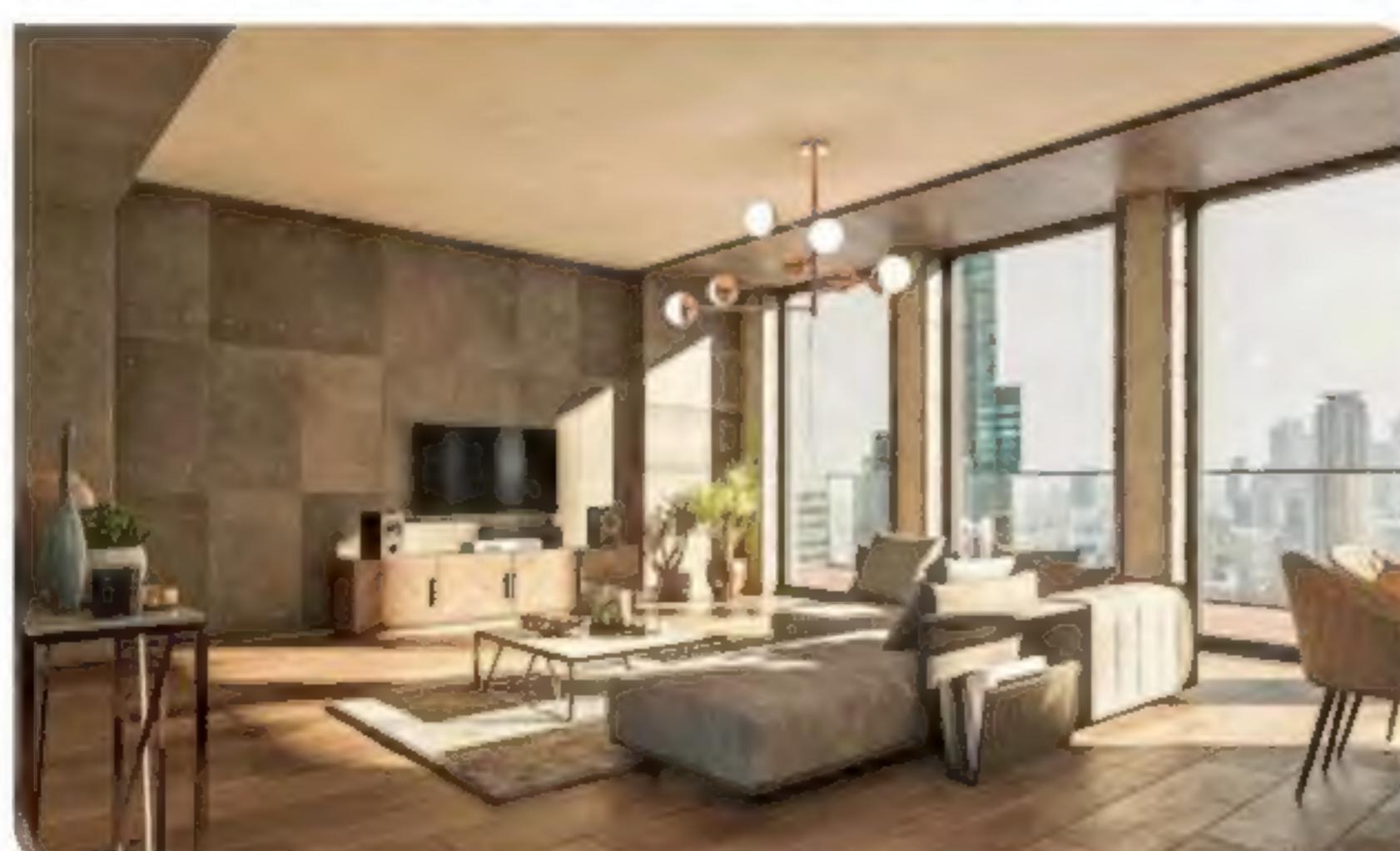
luxurious residential properties offer greater attraction to residents, especially the next generation who want to lead a facility-rich, upmarket lifestyle. Location, better connectivity, and associated infrastructure are also significant

contributors to the increasing popularity of luxury homes."

SIZE MATTERS

Gadde further adds, "There has been a growing preference for spacious homes, which has led to an increase in the average flat sizes across the country. As per industry reports, flat sizes have increased by 11 per cent across India. In fact, bettering the metros, Hyderabad has recorded the highest average flat size of 2300 sq ft in 2023.

While the development of new areas has given developers an opportunity to seek premium rates for



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noida and Greater Noida and the region leads the trend in NCR. At the same time, NCR is also a front-runner in the country in terms of premium and luxury properties. He adds that Noida Expressway and Noida Sector

national growth, supported by increased infrastructure spending and innovative partnerships. New metro projects, widening of the internal roads and better sectorial connectivity have further fuelled the demand. At the same time, there is also a growing desire to have iconic addresses as their homes and people are willing to spend money to lead a quality lifestyle."

Moreover, investments from non-resident Indians (NRIs) have further fuelled this growth, making luxury homes not just symbols of

factors contributing to the growing popularity of luxury homes amongst buyers. The pandemic at the start of the decade has significantly changed the trend for more spacious accommodations with multiple rooms. So, one can observe an increasing preference for 3 to 5-BHK

RENTED	
DOMINO'S	1,70,000
ICICI BANK	1,02,000
HDFC BANK	1,98,000
AXIS BANK	2,15,000
KOTAK BANK	4,50,000
HOSPITAL	16,50,000
FULL BUILDING.	24,00,000
NARESH AGGARWAL PROP 9650244077, 9810110325	

RENTED

DOMINO'S 1,70,000 DLF-1,100 YDS FLOOR

ICICI BANK 1,02,000 SL-1,300 YDS 18 MTR

HDFC BANK 1,98,000 DLF-2,200 YDS 12 MTR

AXIS BANK 2,15,000 DLF-3,500 YDS SIRIS RD.

KOTAK BANK 4,50,000 DLF Park Place

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Natural for those in love to hug & kiss, it's not sexual harassment: Madras HC

Madurai: Hugging and kissing between two persons in love is not sexual harassment, rather it is quite natural, observed Madras HC recently quashing a trial court proceedings against a 20-year-old man in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin, reports **K Kaushik**

Sri Vaikuntam All Women Police had charged the man with sexually harassing a 19-year-old woman. In 2023 the man filed a court petition seeking to quash the FIR registered against him.

As per the case, the man and woman had been in love for three years. In Nov 2022, he took the woman to a lonely place where they talked from 9pm to 12am. Suddenly, he hugged the woman and kissed her. The woman returned home and informed her parents about the relationship. She later asked the man to marry her. But the man refused and started avoiding her. Following this, the woman made a police complaint, based on which a case was registered against him for offence of sexual harassment.

Justice N Anand Venkatesh observed, "To constitute an offence under section 354-A(1)(i) of IPC, a man must commit physical contact and make advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures. Even if the allegations are taken as it is, it is quite natural for two people in the teenage, who are having a love affair, to hug or kiss each other. By no stretch, this can constitute an offence under section 354-A(1)(i) of IPC."

No offence has been made out against the petitioner even if the allegations made in the FIR are taken as it is, therefore, criminal proceedings against the petitioner will result in abuse of law, the judge observed.

HP moves SC to get parliamentary secys' appointment okayed

New Delhi: Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu led Congress govt of Himachal Pradesh has rushed to Supreme Court seeking to validate appointment of six parliamentary secretaries based on a 2006 state law that was quashed by high court two days ago for being illegal and unconstitutional, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

The Sukhu govt, facing internal dissension for some time which was reflected in the loss of Congress candidate A M Singhvi after a tie with the BJP cand.date in Raigarh Sabha election in Feb, revealed its real apprehension.

"The legal consequence would be that six parliamentary secretaries, who are also MLAs are likely to face disqualification under Article 192 of the Constitution as the protection granted to them from the office of profit norms has been taken away without adjudication, causing political instability," the state govt said. It questioned the correctness of HC's Nov 13 judgment and sought a stay. The appeal is likely to be mentioned before CJ Sanjiv Khanna for urgent hearing on Monday.

The state govt said HC erred in finding similarities between Himachal Pradesh Parliament Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries, Allowances, Powers, Privileges and Amenities) Act, enacted in 2006 by the Congress govt led by Virbhadra Singh, and Assam Parliamentary Secretaries (Appointment, Salaries and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 2004, which was enacted by the Tarun Gogoi-led Congress govt.

It said while the Assam law gave status of minister to parliamentary secretaries, it was not so under the Himachal law. The Sukhu govt said even though parliamentary secretaries in the state did not draw salaries equivalent to ministers, HC undertook a 'harsip tting exercise' to equate parliamentary secretaries as part of political executive, even though they did not perform any executive function.

Comedian Faruqui & Shraddha killer on Bishnoi hitlist

Mumbai Standup comedian Munawar Faruqui and Aftab Poonawala, who is facing trial for the gruesome murder of his Phagwara-based girlfriend Shraddha Walkar in Delhi in 2022, were on the hit list of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, the architect of the murder of former state minister and NCP leader Baba Siddique, police said, reports **Ahmed Ali**. This revelation came out during the interrogation of Shivkumar Gautam alias Shiva, the main shooter in the Siddique murder case.

Gautam told police that want accused Shubham Lonkar expressed concern for the delay in eliminating Siddique. "Lonkar told Gautam that another module that he had assigned to target Faruqui may meet with success before them. This prompted Gautam and the other two shooters, Gurmail Singh and Dharamraj Kashyap, to expedite their task on the Bishnoi gang," said a police officer.

In Sept, the group planning the attack on Faruqui had checked into a Delhi hotel where the comedian was put up as he was to perform in the Capital. The gang was furious over his remarks on Hindu deities. However, with the timely action of the intelligence agencies, the attack was foiled. In Oct, Mumbai police enhanced Faruqui's security in view of the threat from the Bishnoi gang.

Meanwhile, follow-up reports that the arrested accused Gaurav Apune, Rupesh Mohol, as well as Gautam and Lonkar had visited a naxal-affected region of Jharkhand and met a key member. Mumbai police have intimated National Investigation Agency, which is likely to take over the investigation or register a fresh case.

Maahi EXTENSION OF IFB
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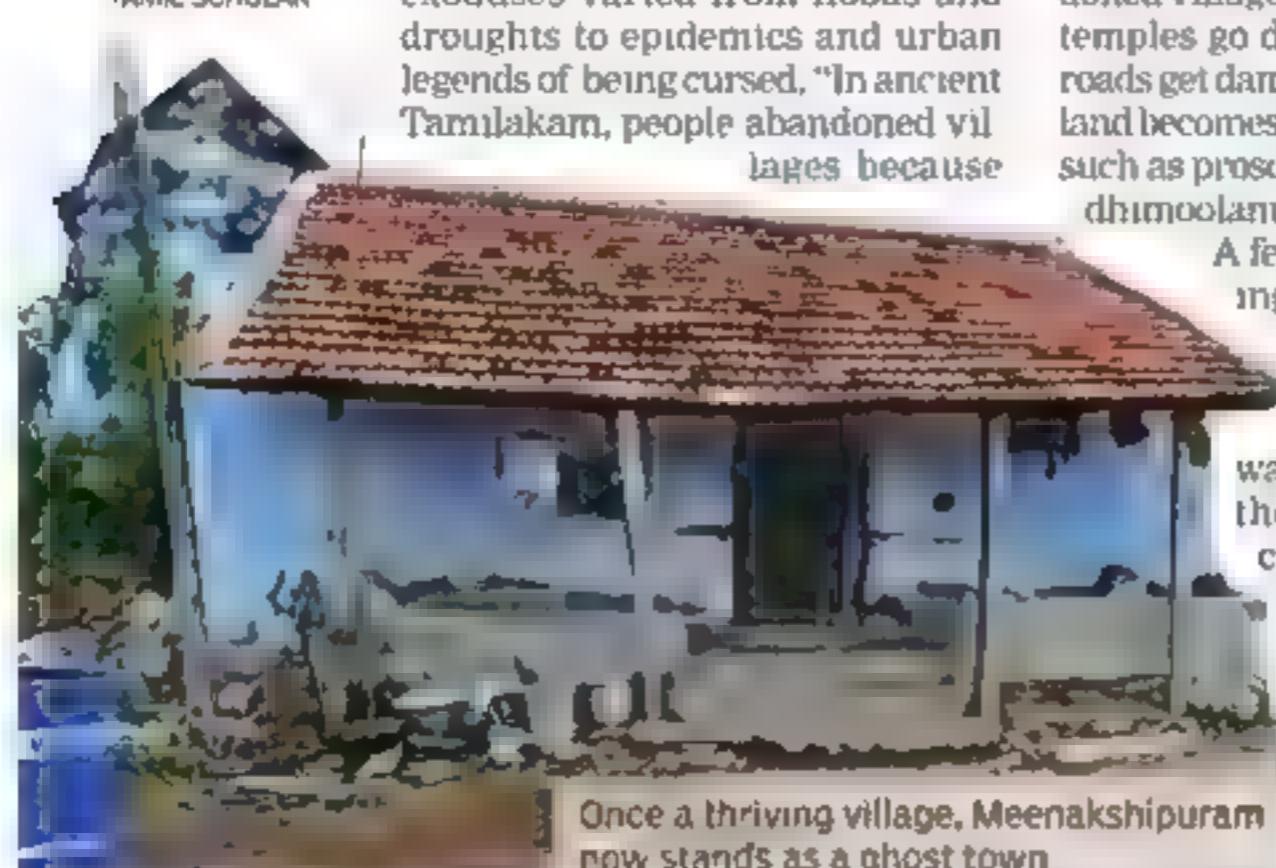
Ghost towns of Tamil Nadu

Dhanushkodi, the state's most famous no man's land, is re-inhabited, yet many others such as Meenakshipuram, which lost its last resident in May, remain deserted



Vinothkumar.N@timesofindia.com

Paananparanar in Sivaganga takes its name from Tamil words for musicians (paanar) and poets (paranar). Now uninhabited, it's been transformed into farmland

M P Srinivasan |
TAMIL SCHOLAR

Once a thriving village, Meenakshipuram now stands as a ghost town

No HC relief to Major in false sex plaint case

Bhopal/Jabalpur: Madhya Pradesh HC has declined to give relief to an Army officer who was charged with falsely accusing a Lt Colonel of sexual harassment.

The petitioner, a Major had alleged that the senior officer made indecent comments at her and tried to grab her hands when she was undergoing a course. After her complaints to seniors allegedly went in vain, she approached the internal committee. An investigation, however, determined it was a fake complaint, and a court of inquiry was ordered against her. The Major challenged it in Armed Forces Tribunal, which did not give her any relief.

A division bench, headed by Chief Justice Suresh Kumar Kait, turned down her plea, saying that since a court of inquiry had already been conducted, court intervention wouldn't be appropriate. **TNN**



EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE
No. ECR-SPJUSTRP/REP/0988/299827
Date 11.11.2024
Sr DMM/Admin./ECR/SPJ on behalf of the President of India "Open E-Tender Notice" from the eligible and experienced agency or contractor for e-tender on Tender No. 72245727 particulars are as under -
SI No. : 1. Name of Item : Supply installation and Commissioning of 05 Set effluent Treatment plant of Capacity 20 KLD at different Coaching Depots of SPJ Division. Quantity 05 Set
AMM/DSL/ECR/SPJ
PR/01515/SPJ/STORE/T/24-25/36

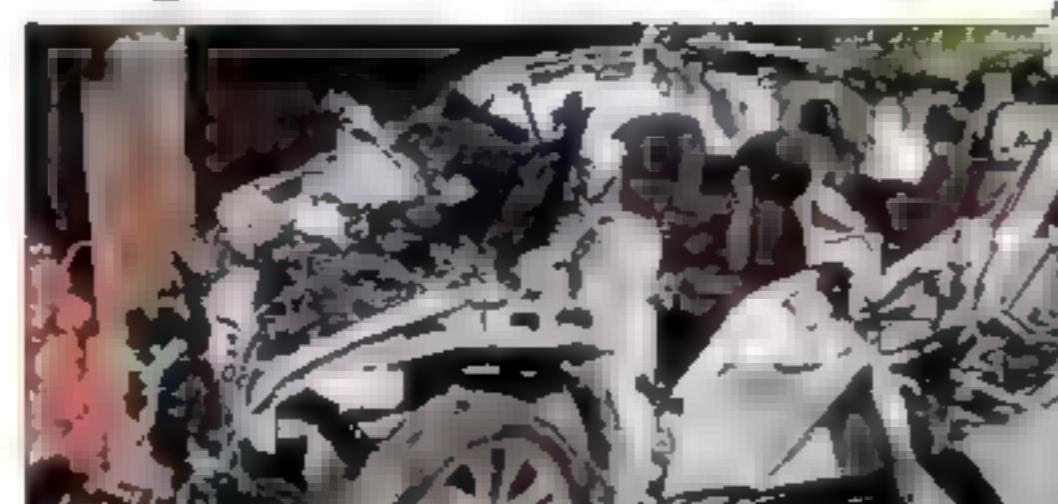
Days after deadly crash, grieving Dehradun pushes for safe driving

Wreckage Shown To Kids To Drive Home Message

Kalyan Das | TNN

Dehradun: Uttarakhand capital Dehradun grappled with the devastating aftermath of a car crash that claimed six young lives and left one critically injured as horrific details of the accident came in. With the tragedy shaking the city to its core, sparking grief, shock, and a collective determination to tackle the dangers of reckless driving, parents of young adults could be seen bringing their children to Canteen police station to view the mangled remains of the speeding multi-utility vehicle (MUV) that collided with a container truck at ONGC intersection at 1.30am on Tuesday. The wreckage has become a chilling reminder of the consequences of negligence behind the wheel.

The victims, aged between 19 and 24, were identified as Guneeet Singh, Kamakshi Singh, Navya Goyal, Rishabh Jain, and Atul Agrawal (all from Dehradun) and Kunal Kukreja from Himachal Pradesh. The lone survivor, Siddhesh Agrawal, 25, remains in critical condition at a local hospital.



The car crash claimed six young lives. The wreckage has become a chilling reminder of the consequences of negligence behind the wheel

Atul, who was driving, reportedly lost control of the vehicle, leading to the fatal collision. Preliminary investigations suggest overspeeding as primary cause of the crash, with the truck driver cleared of fault. Witnesses described the crash site as harrowing, with severed body parts and mangled metal strewn across the road. Videos from the scene have circulated widely on social media.

The hashtag #DehradunCarAccident trended on social media platforms, with over 6,000 posts on X urging drivers to exercise caution. Reports suggested the group had embarked on a late-night drive following a party at home of sole survivor, resulting in discussions on the dangers of drunk driving. DGP Abhayan Kumar is

5 of wedding party killed in highway crash

Roorkee: Five men from Meerut, travelling as part of a wedding procession to Roorkee, died in a road accident late on Thursday night after their car collided with a divider near Manglaur some 10 km away, overturning multiple times on the Delhi Haridwar national highway. The vehicle was carrying 10 passengers, reports **Tapovan Susheel**.

Sujal, 17, and Sonu, 22, died on the spot while Vansh, 20, and Aditya, 19, died at a government hospital. Kashi, 30, who was admitted to a higher centre in Meerut in critical condition, succumbed to injuries on Friday. The remaining five passengers sustained multiple injuries but are reported to be out of danger.

The 10 young men from Meerut had left for Roorkee in an SUV to join wedding procession of one Manish Kumar. On Thursday it was around 10pm near Deoband Tiraha (intersection) in Manglaur that mishap occurred, with some passengers being flung out of the car, and others remaining trapped inside the severely damaged vehicle.

Dip in drunk driving toll in past few years, slight rise in '22: Data

Dipak.Dash@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The gruesome road crash in Dehradun has shocked the nation, but official data show that deaths in road crashes due to drunk driving has been falling for the past few years, except a slight increase in 2022. Data show that while 2,378 persons died in road crashes due to drunk driving in 2019, the numbers reduced to 1,862 and 1,352 in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

In 2022, such fatalities increased to 1,503. The road transport ministry is yet to publish data of 2023.

Globally, speeding, driving under the influence of alcohol and other psychoactive substances, non-use of motorcycle helmets, seatbelts and child restraints, and distracted driving are the four major causes of road crashes and fatalities. As per the World Health Organisation, driving under the influence of alcohol and any psychoactive substance increases the risk of a crash that results in death or serious injuries.

In the case of drunk driving, the risk of a road traffic crash starts at low levels of blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and increases significantly when the driver's BAC is ≥ 0.04 (grams of ethanol per deciliter) or g/dL. In the case of drug-driving, the risk of incurring a road traffic crash is increased to differing degrees depending on the psychoactive drug used, as per World Health Organisation.

As per United States Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA), as alcohol levels rise in a person's system, the negative effects on the central nervous system increase. "At a BAC of 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter (g/dL) of blood, crash risk increases exponentially," it says.

Bring health supplements under drug control watch, suggests panel

DurgeshNandan.Jha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: In a major shift in policy to regulate manufacture and sale of health supplements in the country, an inter-ministerial committee has suggested that supplements claiming to cure or mitigate any specific disease should be considered a drug and, therefore, come under the purview of Central Drug Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO).

Currently, all such products come under the purview of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

(FSSAI). The committee, headed by former health secretary Apurva Chandra, has suggested they should be brought under the purview of CDSCO. This would mean more scrutiny of such products before licensing and increased penalty on making false claims about disease-risk reduction.

Main reason why many companies transfer some products from medicine or drug category to dietary supplement category is to escape price regulation. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) regulates pricing of drugs and

ensures availability of medicines at affordable prices.

While NPPA has the authority to monitor and fix prices of drugs, it cannot take any action if the same drug is re-launched as a food supplement. The recommendation to categorise many health supplements as drugs will, therefore, have an impact on pricing of these products as well, officials said.

Other steps suggested include a separate provision of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), establishing dedicated cell for monitoring of advertisements for such products.

Nehu VC goes on leave amid ouster demand

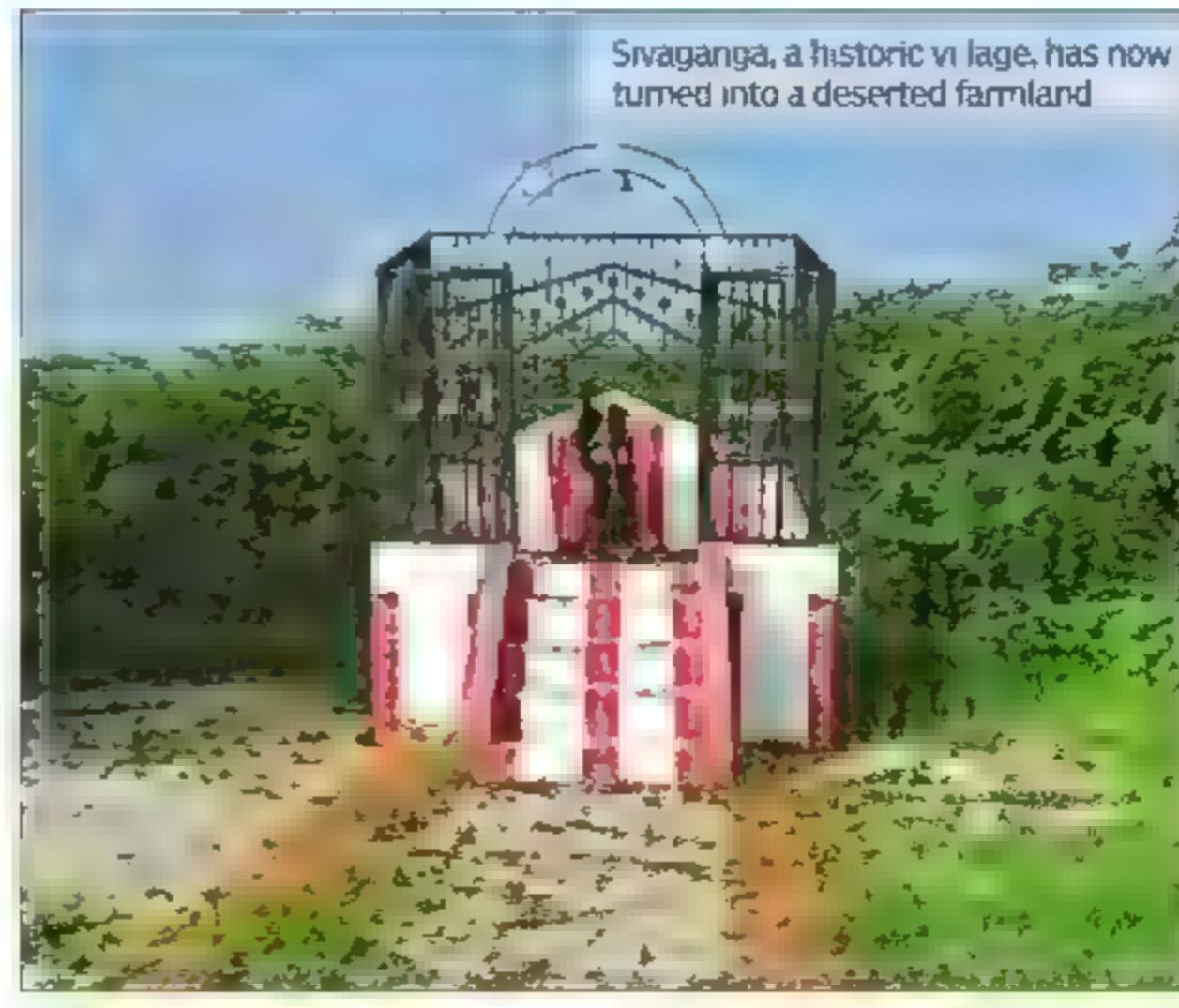
Shillong: North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) vice-chancellor Prabha Shankar Shukla has proceeded on leave until Nov 29 amid protests by students and faculty members demanding his removal, reports **Manosh Das**. The agitators have expressed opposition to the VC's appointments of registrar and assistant registrar, considering the selected individuals unsuitable for their respective positions. Citing "unavoidable circumstances", Shukla announced he would take earned leave from Nov 17. N Saha, the most senior academic at NEHU, has been given administrative responsibilities.

TO LINE OF NO CONTROL

SANDEEP ADHWARYU



Dhanushkodi in Pamban Island was abandoned after the 1964 Rameswaram cyclone



Sivaganga, a historic village, has now turned into a deserted farmland



not so fortunate. "Most become infested with mesquites," says Aadhimoolam, general secretary of the Mullai Periyar Vaigai Irrigation Farmers Association.

Srinivasan, from Sivaganga, says there are ancient villages in the district that he abandoned. "Paanparanar, named for musicians ('paanar') and poets ('paranar'), was gifted by a king. Now uninhabited, it's been converted to farmland," he says.

The state govt's revenue department categorises such abandoned villages as "pechilla gramam" in its records, a term that denotes "agricultural lands without human habitation" rather than the literal sense of "abandonment," says K Selvan, state general secretary of the TN village administrative officers association. "A 100-acre land may be used for collective farming by farmers commuting daily from nearby villages. Such areas gain names and are classified as revenue villages, even without residents. The govt labels only uninhabited agricultural lands as 'pechilla gramam', and usually has no plans to repopulate them."

Rajan says many villages in Odisha have been classified "tsuna mi-ready" following past tsunamis and other disasters. However, many villagers have since migrated to states such as Kerala in search of livelihoods. "People who migrated to Kerala earn ₹20,000 monthly but say they'd be happier with less than half of that if they can earn a living in their Odisha villages. Without govt rehabilitation, these ghost towns can't be repopulated," he says.

Aadhimoolam believes ghost villages can be repopulated if the govt stops reallocating grazing lands for development. "These districts are ideal for livestock and animal husbandry, which could strengthen the local economy and help prevent village abandonment," he says.

Cornea transplant wait list to be soon on centralised platform

New Delhi: Soon, the list of patients waiting for cornea transplant in India will be available on a centralised platform. While waiting lists for organs such as heart, liver and kidney are available centrally on website of National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO), no such list was available for cornea till date, reports **Durgesh Nandan Jha**.

Recently, NOTTO director Dr Anil Kumar has written to all the states/UTs to issue a directive to registered hospitals and eye banks to share the data related to list of patients waiting for cornea transplant, number of cornea donation and transplantation, and number of cornea stored and utilised.

Cornea is the transparent tissue that covers the eye. It allows light to enter and performs two-thirds of the focusing tasks. For people suffering from vision loss due to irreparable damage of the tissue, transplant is the only option. It involves replacing a diseased or scarred cornea with cornea donated by a deceased person.

Dr Namrata Sharma, a professor of ophthalmology at AIIMS, who is also associated with Eye Bank Association of India, said India needs nearly two lakh corneas per year to treat patients suffering from blindness caused irreparable damage to the tissue. "In 2023-24, only 49,314 corneas were collected of which 27,394 could be used for transplant," Dr Sharma said, adding that availability of information related to cornea collection and utilisation would help policymakers to ensure optimum utilisation of tissues collected and equitable distribution as well. The NOTTO has said that eye banks operating across the country should have a minimum 100 collections in a year or they could risk losing the licence to operate.

India has about 726 registered eye banks but, govt sources said, only about 200 are operational.

Entering hotel room with man no signal of consent for sex: HC

Panaji: Merely entering a hotel room with a man doesn't imply a woman's consent to sex, the high court of Bombay at Goa held while setting aside a sessions court order discharging a rape accused, reports **Lisa Monteiro**.

Noting that the survivor came out of the hotel room crying and immediately filed a police complaint for rape, Justice Bharat Deshpande said the additional sessions judge had erred in concluding that the woman booking the hotel room and going there with the accused meant she consented to sexual intercourse. The HC directed the trial court to frame charges against the accused for rape and criminal intimidation, saying there was sufficient material to proceed against him.

Justice Deshpande said the sessions judge "has clearly mixed two aspects — going inside with the accused in a room without any protest, and giving consent for what happened in the room".

The survivor alleged that the accused took her to the hotel on the pretext of a meeting with an agent, who was supposed to provide her a job abroad.

Kerala Maritime Board

(A Statutory Board of Govt of Kerala
HO TC XXII/1666 (4&5)
1st Floor, Mulamoottil Building Pipinmoodu
Sasthamangalam, PIN - 695010

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

EOI Ref No. HOKMB-TVM/1443/2024/C1(Devp)

Date 30 10 2024

EOI for development and maintenance of Kozhikode multipurpose transit yard in north beach adjacent to signal station

The Kerala Maritime Board (KMB) is soliciting

Expressions of Interest (EOI)

from competent firms for development and maintenance of Kozhikode multipurpose transit yard in North beach adjacent to signal station.

The detailed document can be downloaded from KMB's official website (www.kmb.kerala.gov.in/en/about/tender)

Proposals must be submitted on or before

16/12/2024, 03:00 PM.

Please send your queries to the email id: kmb.kerala@gmail.com.

Sd/- Chief Executive Officer
Kerala Maritime Board

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

No. : CEN-2024-05

Dated : 12.11.2024

E-Tender Notice

Dy. CE/Const.-4/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites the following E-Tenders on Prescribed form for the following works upto 15:00 hrs. on 16.12.2024. The details of the tenders are as under:-

Tender No. CEN-2024-05 Approx. cost of work (Rs.) : 64836188.00

Means of work : Mobile flash Butt welding of rail on various loop lines, 3rd line and existing UP/DN lines in the jurisdiction of Dy. CE/CH/PRYJ and any other location decided by Engineer-in-charge Prayagraj division.

Bid Security (Rs.) : 474200.00 Completion period : 24 Months

Tender Closing Date & Time : 16.12.2024 15:00 hrs

Date of Opening of tender : 16.12.2024 15:30 hrs

Type of tendering : Open Tender (Single Packet system)

Note : (1) The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website [www.reps.gov.in](http://reps.gov.in) up to 15:00 on 16.12.2024 & date of tender opening i.e., 16.12.2024. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-bid shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IRREP website along with Digital Signature Certificates issued by GCA under IT Act-2000. (3) The Bid Security shall be deposited either in cash through e-payment gateway or submitted as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents. The Bank Guarantee bond shall be per Annexure-VIA as given in Tender Document and shall be valid for a period of 90 days beyond the bid validity period. (4) Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letterhead if attached by vendor shall be straight way ignored and shall not be considered. (5) Joint Venture (JV)/Consortium/CUs shall be considered for the tender having cost more than 16 Cr. (6) Documents being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. (7) The tenderers shall submit a certificate as given in tender document in standard format for all items without which their tender may not be considered and shall be summarily rejected. (8) Each page of the copy of documents/certificates in support of credentials, submitted by the tenderer shall be self-attested/digitally signed by the tenderer or authorized representative of the tendering firm. Self-attestation shall include signature, stamp and date (on each page). Only those documents which are declared explicitly by the tenderer as "documents supporting the claim qualifying the bid down eligibility criteria" will be considered for evaluation whether tender in case of any wrong information submitted by the tenderer, the contract will be terminated. Bid Security (BS), Performance Guarantee (PG) and Security Deposit (SD) of contract will be forfeited and agency will be banned for doing business on entire Indian Railways for five (5) years. (9) GST Act & rules issued from time to time by the Government authorities shall be applicable. (10) In case of any difficulty headache available on the website of IRREP may be approached. (11) Tender online can be submitted up to 16:00 hrs. on 16.12.2024 and will be opened at 16:30 hrs. on 16.12.2024. 1982/24 (C)

 © CCRONCR North central railways © reponsory © CPPNR © www.indianrailways.gov.in

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a Girl namely: Chavi, D/o: Raju R/o: N-334, Mangolpuri, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped from her home since 02 10 2024 at 03:00 PM. In this regard a FIR No 994/24. U.s: 137(2) BNS, has been registered at PS: Mangolpuri, Delhi. The description of the missing Girl as under

Age: 16 years Height: 4'6" Complexion: Fair Built: Thin, Face: Long Identity Mark: Mole on Cheek, Wearing: Blue Colour Top, Black Colour Pajami and Hawa Si upper in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. Any person is having information or clue about this missing Girl may kindly inform to the following

Ph No. 011-24368638, 24368641
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail: cib@cbi.gov.in

S.H.O

Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/15079/OD/2024 Ph No. 011-27922188, 011-27921168

TENDER NOTICE

- 1 NCC group HQ, Cuttack (Odisha Directorate) invites sealed tenders for procurement of clothing and accoutrements for Odisha NCC Contingent participating in Republic day camp - 2025
2. Tender Documents along with terms and conditions and details of items can be obtained from Odisha Directorate website (www.rrorissa.org) and also from the office of 7 Odisha Battalion NCC, Bhadrak. A non-refundable tender cost Rs. 1,000/- only by DD to OIC Kitting (RDC), 7 Odisha Battalion NCC, Bhadrak, payable at Bhadrak, should be enclosed with the Tender Documents. The last date of submission of Tender at NCC Group HQ, Cuttack, is on or before 1630 hrs on 30 Nov 2024. Tender will be opened by a Board of Officer at NCC Group HQ, Cuttack, at 1100 hrs on 02 Dec 2024 for any query please contact Commanding Officer, 7 Odisha Battalion NCC Mob No. 7875261402

Sd/-
Administrative Officer NCC Group HQ,
Cuttack
Mob : 9797022877

For Details call between 10am to 6pm

Contact - 9403566219, 9270076724, 8007765693, 9869067617

Government Certificate workshop on

**Government Certificate workshop on Cyber Security Driven by Al**

Sessions include hands on practice

Courses duration : 4 days (ONLINE) Course dates: 23,24,30 November, 1 December 2024

Email ID : training@demi.org Website : www.demi.org

Course Fees-4000+18% GST For Student 2500 +18 % GST

In the name of IDEMI Mumbai

Content : Introduction to Cyber Security, Introduction

to AI & ML, AI for Threat Detection, Deploying AI Locally

For IT professionals,Banks, Industries, Police, Law Practitioners & other interested persons

For Details call between 10am to 6pm

Contact - 9403566219, 9270076724, 8007765693, 9869067617

SOUTHERN RAILWAY**CHENNAI DIVISION (MECHANICAL BRANCH)**

GEM Bid NO GEM2024/B/560181 DT:13.11.2024

Divisional Railway Manager/Mechanical Branch/Chennai Division, Chennai-600 004 for and on behalf of the President of India invites ONLINE tenders for the following work as per tender notice given in the GEM Portal <http://gem.gov.in>. The tender(s)/contract(s) intending to apply for e-tender for Mechanical works in Chennai Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal <http://gem.gov.in> and only online tenders will be accepted

Description: On Board Housekeeping Services at BBQ/GSN & TBM Coaching Depots - for a period of 04 years on Hourly basis

Location	Advertised tender Value in (₹)	Earliest Money Deposit in (₹)	Similar Nature of Work	Period of Completion in months
Coaching Depots of BBQ/ GSN & TBM	86,05,85,385/-	34,52,930/-	Applicable	04-Years

Tender closing date and time: 04.12.2024 @ 16:00 hrs.

Details of value of tender, EMD are given in e-portal <http://gem.gov.in>

For details bid submission please refer to web-portal <http://gem.gov.in>
Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical) Chennai Division, Chennai-600 004

UJVN Limited

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharan Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradoon-248004

Telephone: 0135-2733608, Fax: 0135-2733608

CIN No: U46191UP2001SCGC25266, Website: [www.ujvn.com](http://ujvn.com)

RO No. 1008 e-Tender Notice Dated 14.11.2024

Office of the Executive Engineer (IT), "UJJWAL", Maharan Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradoon Invites online bid from interested bidders. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender no. e-02/UJVN/EE/ITy2024-25

Name of Work: Development of e-FMS Solution

Estimated cost : ₹ 36,00,000/- only (GST extra)

Date of availability of bid document on e-portal: 14.11.2024 at 17:00 Hrs.

Last date for submission of bid on e-portal: 05.12.2024 up-to 17:00 Hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal ["https://uktenders.gov.in"](https://uktenders.gov.in)

Executive Engineer (IT)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

F. No 624/DHC/IT/No.97

Dated: 14.11.2024

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

High Court of Delhi is calling quotations from the firms/vendors authorized by OEM for purchase of Router, L2 Switch & L3 switch with 05 years on-site comprehensive warranty

Detailed Tender Notice is available under "Public Notices" column of the official website of High Court of Delhi i.e. www.delhighcourt.nic.in. Last date for submission of quotation is 07.12.2024

Yours Truly,

Sd/-

(AJAI KUMAR RANA)

Assistant Registrar (IT)

for Registrar General

**E-TENDER NOTICE Date: 14.11.2024**

Office of the Executive Engineer (Test) Vidyut Bhawan, Dakpathar, invites online bids from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender No. 08/EE/Test/DKP/2024-25

Work Name: "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 01 set lead Acid Plates Battery Bank of 220 V DC/ 300 AH Capacity and 02 no 440 V AC to 220 V DC (80 A), FCBC Battery charger, after dismantling of old battery bank and chargers at Khodin Power Station"

Estimated cost: 76,90,500 +GST Extra

Date of Availability of bid document on e-portal: 16.11.2024 from 17:30 Hrs.

Last date for submission of bids on e-portal: 07.12.2024 up-to 13:00 Hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>

Executive Engineer (Test), Dakpathar

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

E-TENDER NOTICE EXTENSION NOTICE

E-tender Specification No. CCP-I/26/2024-2025 invited by this office for supply of Disc Fitting (B65) type for Panther 90Km are hereby extended due to unavoidable reasons. The e-tender can be purchased and submitted upto 17:00 hrs of 25.11.2024. Part-1 of the e-tender shall be opened on 26.11.2024 at 15:30hrs.

Other terms and conditions will remain same as per original tender notice. For further details, please visit our website www.uptenders.gov.in.

No. 617/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2/ Dated : 14/11/2024

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
Dakpathar

Save Electricity in the Interest of Nation

Use LED Bulbs, Save Electricity (File No. 1923)

Pay Electricity Bill online 24x7 from www.uptenders.gov.in (For information on Electricity tariff, informer may report to Call free No 18001004195 / Fax No 0135-2760911)

For more details please visit E Tender Website www.uptenders.gov.in and E-tender information is available at PTCUJ Website www.ptcuj.org

For any assistance on E-Tendering, please contact +91-9899890000

Chief Engineer (O&M)

LETTER NO. 2567/CE/O&M/PTCUJ/HLD/E Tender

Kumaon Zone DATE 14.11



THE WORST OF TIMES...
BUT ALSO, THE BEST

We live amidst paradoxes. On the one hand, we are all of us, gentle reader at war with our home. As we add layer upon layer of needs and greeds on our existence, we tear a few more strips off Earth's skin or land an extra punch on its firmament. The more fossil fuelled electricity we use, the more we drive or fly thus, the more meat we eat, land we burn and plastic we discard, the more Earth suffers. Our fossil fuel emissions the ongoing COP29 climate summit estimates global carbon dioxide emissions reached 41.6 billion metric tons in 2024 — from activities both essential and escapist are wrapping Earth in a deadly haze. This traps heat, raising Earth's temperature — the World Meteorological Organisation finds global temperature 1.54°C above the pre-industrial average, 2024 heading to being the warmest year in history. This is literally making Earth melt — Antarctic sea ice is at its second-lowest level while oceans have risen by 111 mm from 1993 to 2024, this rate doubling in 31 years. Along side, temperature rise is spurring extreme weather events — 2024 has seen apocalyptic rain flooding Delhi to Valencia, deadly wildfires blazing across South America and hurricanes hitting North Carolina.

It doesn't seem an exaggeration to think humanity has wounded Earth indefinitely. Yet, we also stand before the best of times. Most importantly, many of us now know the links between fossil fuels and choking pollution, species destruction and fatal warming. This was not privy to the public earlier — just some years ago, entrenched interests were pushing up climate science at educational institutions. Today, nations know more of the data explaining our existence — and many are prepared to make amends with Earth. While India's total renewable energy installed capacity increased by an impressive 13.5% in 2024, the International Energy Agency estimates green energy in power, heat and transport worldwide will rise by 60%, renewables in final energy consumption going from 13% to 20% by 2030. The transition is still painfully slow — UNEP stresses emissions must fall 42% by 2030. However, at least we now know it's essential.

Efforts in this direction will meet obstacles — but they will not remain unchallenged. As Times Evoke's global experts emphasise, more people learning the history and potential future — of a world swathed in perilous power means more demand for alternatives. Fortunately, we live in an age of invention where satellites & AI can help. Do it! Times Evoke in exploring humanity's relationship with Earth — with its sicknesses and health, scarcities and plenty, wars and peace, and its ability for happiness to vanquish despair. This also evokes, dear reader, the story of your life.

'From silver to slavery, the planetary crisis comes from the human capacity to desire — and harm'

Sunil Amrit is the Renu and Anand Dhawan Professor of History at Yale University. Speaking to Srijana Mitra Das at Times Evoke, he discusses his book 'The Burning Earth' and archives planetary hurt:

What is the core argument — and hope — in 'The Burning Earth'?

■ The hope is making the case that environmental justice is urgent and we must reckon with the multiple stories that have brought us to this point. The United Nations calls this a 'triple planetary crisis' — we are not only in a climate crisis but also biodiversity and health.

To know how we got here, we need to put together two stories. One is a very long term one, a struggle for human freedom in the most elemental sense — this is the freedom to live, to have enough beyond bare survival, to be able to imagine a future. All that demanded some environmental control. But there is also a very different story of the wanton, irreversible environmental destruction seen over the last few hundred years — that is driven by 'freedom' becoming domination. The planetary crisis is the cumulative outcome of all our desires and ambitions, with the vastly disproportionate effect a minority had in pushing the most environmental harms.

Why did the second idea spread unequally? Why didn't India or China, for instance, conduct global exploration and then, exploitation like European societies?

■ One of the fundamental conditions



IRON MEN? Migrants labouring for ore

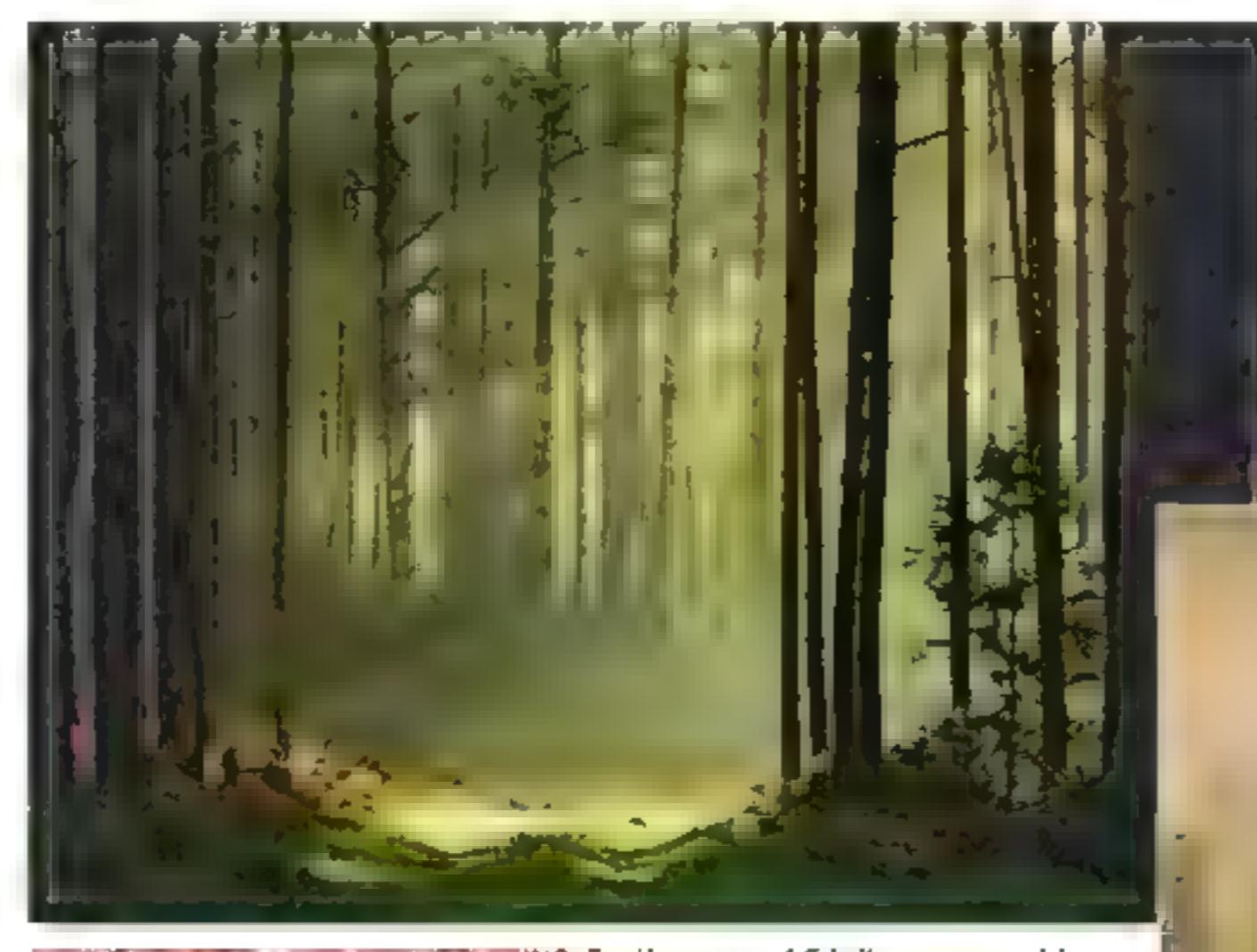
for that worldview to develop is to see nature and other people as something to be conquered. This also involves a capacity to destroy — the ability to cause harm is at its centre. The gulf that opens between different societies, in their ability to inflict destruction on other people, animals and nature, is what embodies the sense that any thing is possible. The portable firearm plays a pivotal role here — these were fundamental over the last 500 years in

■ Surgeons are among Earth's most ancient — they are peers of dinosaurs — and endangered species. 85% sturgeons face extinction due to declines in their natural habitat, rivers they migrate across being dammed, and overfishing as humans seek more and more caviar from sturgeon roe. If connoisseurs could skip this, sturgeons might even live their natural 100 years



■ Revered in ancient Egypt, ibises have slender, down-curved bills. They had back 60 million years but today, the giant ibis is critically endangered while others face habitat destruction for farms, rubber and cassava plantations, insecticides and hunters — the scarlet ibis is hunted for its plumage, despite being Trinidad's national bird

Research: IUCN, Smithsonian Magazine, BBC, WWF, Encyclopedia Britannica



AGING: Earth is over 4.5 billion years old — humans are just 7 million years old, younger than mushrooms, trees and snails, but the planet's youngest species have changed its physiology

situations where the capacity of Europeans to inflict destruction was greater than those of the societies they sought to conquer

Why is growing rice in China centuries ago an important point here?

■ It's a remarkable story — one strain of rice from central Vietnam called 'charma pa' revolutionised the possibility of sustaining human communities. Champa rice is very fast-ripening and through the intervention of the Chinese emperor in the 11th century CE, around 1,000 years ago, it spread through southern China. It transformed China's demography — for the first time, the bulk of the Chinese population lived in the south, not the north. This literally changed the world because it allowed huge economic flourishing, making China the very heart of the global economy. It was for access to Chinese markets that the Europeans embarked on all their adventures.

Did other commodities also become pivotal in Earth's transformation?

■ I emphasise sugar — arguably, no crop has done more harm to the environment or human welfare. Sugar brought many transformations, including the plantation, a distinctive kind of agriculture all about maximising one particular crop's yield as quickly as possible, regardless of the consequences — what allowed this was unfree labour. So, even before enslaved African labour, on the island of Madeira in the Atlantic, which they burned to make plantations, the Portuguese began using local enslaved labour

Alongside, there were silver and gold. I write about silver mining in Potosí which generated a significant amount of all the silver in the world — at inhuman cost to labourers. This is when mercury started being used to extract silver and there's archaeological evidence of how devastating this was to workers. It also left a wasteland in the landscape — and it began the global economy because a third of this silver ended up in China, shipped on galleons from Acapulco to Manila from the 16th to the 19th century. This is what the Europeans used to get into Chinese markets. Eventually, they didn't want

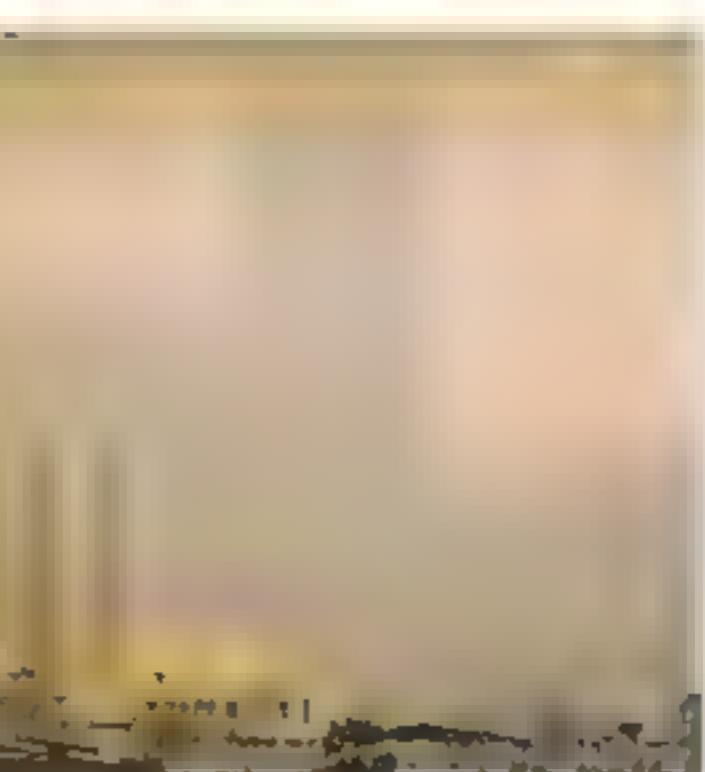
emboldens the idea that white Christian European men have transcended their animal origins — and now, they sit above it all. That pattern is repeated in other places — the most intensive environmental harm goes with the greatest human exploitation.

A book by Gabrielle Hecht on South Africa says you can see apartheid from space. South Africa's gold mining industry, exploiting migrant African labour, began in the 19th century. Those mine dumps are still visible around Johannesburg — you can see the seam of the gold mine of the Witwatersrand from space. It has completely shaped that city and the toxicity of its groundwater into which mine waste still leaches 140 years later.

to sell silver anymore so, they started using Indian opium to access China

How does the idea of human freedom evolve as nature's exploration thus grew?

■ Both are twinmed processes — you see them coming together with the first Iberian conquests in the Americas. The language used to describe the indigenous peoples slaughtered there was that they were 'not fully human'. There is a de-humanisation of some, which further



DEATH: The Amazon rainforest is under threat from deforestation and fires.

destruction. We can see many iterations in the 20th century, like the Brazilian state's persecution of indigenous peoples accompanying mass deforestation in the Amazon rainforest.

Why is war discussed so little as a shaper of our environment?

■ War has an outsized impact in making this planetary crisis. Consider the two World Wars — first, they brought home the sheer power and capacity of human beings to cause destruction. Second, they fundamentally altered the human imagination — when World War I began, David Lloyd George, then British Minister for Munitions, likened it to a natural disaster, using metaphors like an earthquake or cyclone. Then, it seemed like only the power of nature could describe such destruction — by the end of the war, that had completely changed. The Norwegian meteorologist Vilhelm Bjerknes made a breakthrough discovery in climate science of 'Polar fronts' — a metaphor he drew directly from the trenches of war. It's as if, after WWI, only the metaphors of human armies could help us understand natural forces. The wars caused a fundamental imaginative transformation of how much power humans could wield.

What role do non-human animals play in this history?

■ Until the 20th century, animals were pivotal to human capacities to do anything. I write of how one in four horses in the world were in the Mongol army without them, the Mongols couldn't have created one of the largest con-



BIG BANG: The arms industry hurts Earth

tiguous empires ever. Animals remain central to the human capacity to produce food — yet, that's accompanied by a story starting in the 18th century of mass destructions. Bison in North America went from 40 million to extinction in a few decades. It's now estimated we humans kill more than a billion animals a year — our dependence on animals goes together with a level of violence and destruction to which we have become totally desensitised.

■ It's OUR WORLD TOO: Humans treat our co-species mostly as beasts of burden

■ Antelope are graceful runners — yet, they can't outrun humans. 'Fashionable' people seek the Tibetan antelope's wool to flaunt in 'shatoosh' shawls while Saigas went from one million in the 1990s to 12,000, facing habitat loss and hunters. 25% of antelope species face extinction — think of that when you next hear of blackbucks

Research: IUCN, Smithsonian Magazine, BBC, WWF, Encyclopedia Britannica

■ READER'S WRITE

Dear Times Evoke,
TE continues to impress us, providing insightful perspectives and thought-provoking analyses. The interview with Kristine C. Harper (9th November) on climate manipulation was another intriguing read. Aside from the environmental consequences of tampering with the climate, at a time of geopolitical tensions, even well-intentioned weather manipulation might be viewed as hostile. An engaging TE article!

— Dr Dipankar Guha, Delhi

I wait eagerly to read the beautiful TE every weekend and I was enthralled to learn how the US government could literally 'make it rain'. Kristine Harper discussed human innovation. But she also expressed doubts about how far such tinkering with nature should go. Ideas of reflecting the sun's rays back are alarming. Thank you, TE, for always giving us food for thought.

— Poornima Vij, Bengaluru

TE keeps me engaged with its articles which have lots of information and untold facts, presented in a straightforward way. I enjoyed reading Kristine Harper who succinctly explained events leading to climatic changes today. I was astonished to read about Irving Langmuir, the Nobel laureate chemist, making artificial rain. Thanks for this wonderful article, TE!

— Sekar Sairam, Aladur

Every Saturday morning, TE comes to me as a treat. This time too, Kristine C. Harper's interview was superb. From WWII and beyond, Harper flawlessly explained the evolution of different scientific researches, including producing rain in labs, thus creating 'designer weather'. Thank you, TE, for such knowledgeable and beautifully presented articles.

— MK Goel, Delhi

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BEFORE: Coral reefs boost oxygen and life

IN THE DEEP

WHAT DRILL, BABY, DRILL? Marine drilling for oil and gas produces seismic and noise disturbances as a matter of course — but it can also lead to fuels leaking into the seas, fouling these for those whose natural home these waters are and wrecking key ecosystems



WHAT DRILL, BABY, DRILL? Marine drilling for oil and gas produces seismic and noise disturbances as a matter of course — but it can also lead to fuels leaking into the seas, fouling these for those whose natural home these waters are and wrecking key ecosystems

IN THE DEEP

water warms, the animals try to move to colder water — so, they could travel deeper or change their latitude. Hence, a redistribution of species is expected. Many island nations rely on certain fish, like tuna, as a major source of income — if those move away, they will lose this earning.'

As the crowd bustles about, Levin continues, 'Warming can also release frozen methane from below the sea surface. It changes the solubility of gas in the ocean — as a result, the ocean loses oxygen or deoxygenates. Warming also makes waters more stratified — vertical mixing is less likely. This means the interior of the ocean loses oxygen because while it is consumed by microbes and animals, it's not as easily replaced when the waters are more stratified. Both these phenomena are causing a loss of oxygen in the global seas. So far, in the post-industrial era, we've lost 2% of this.' Levin emphasises, 'But this is not evenly distributed and some areas have lost 30% to 40%.' What happens in the ocean doesn't just stay there — Levin adds ocean warming greatly impacts climate on land.

Climate change, of course, is unfurling as we speak but there are other immediate threats the deep-sea faces. Levin has written of the ocean as 'the last great wilderness' on Earth but she now emphasises just how

much peril confronts these hitherto undisturbed expanses. Right now, the deep sea is relatively pristine except along our continental margins — there's a lot of bottom fishing, trawling and longlining there. There is great damage already from that — this destroys the sea floor and wrecks any three-dimensional structures made by animals. Lost fishing gear traps animals — that is 'ghost fishing' — and there's by catch. There is a huge amount of debris underwater too — every time I dive, I see cans, plastic bags, bottles, shoes, so many things. These pollutants add to the contamination from land, including chemicals and microplastics dumped into our rivers, winding into the deep sea.'

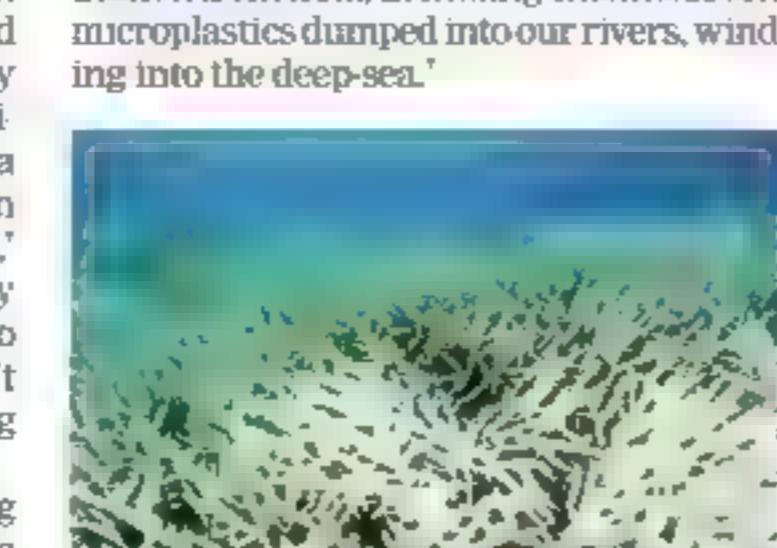
Industrial activities centred in these waters also pose hazards. Levin comments, 'Oil and gas drilling in deep water have been done for decades now. In many places, this is being phased out as fossil fuels are reduced but in others, especially developing countries, this is just beginning as oil companies are planning new activities there. The regular effects of such drilling include noise and seismic impacts which can be very damaging to marine mammals. However, when there is a blow-out of the rig, as happened in the Deepwater Horizon off the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, the effects are devastating,' Levin says with a firmness both wry and sad. 'The oil spilled is very toxic to marine life — but so are the dispersants and chemicals used for cleaning up.'

Yet, these perils don't deter more humans from eyeing these waters. Marine mining is now proposed, literally as a silver bullet to several ends. Levin outlines, 'People are seeking to mine ocean nodules and plumes for cobalt, nickel and copper, hydrothermal vents for gold and silver, manganese crust on sea mounts for cobalt and nickel and in coastal waters, phosphate mining is sought for fertilisers. All these in-

clude actually damaging to biodiversity in a way that could affect the services species provide for climate regulation. People often treat climate and biodiversity as separate issues but these are very closely connected, especially in the ocean.'

When asked about her research on invertebrate life histories in the seas, the scientist's eyes soften and she laughs very gently. She says, 'I used to work a lot on this, especially larvae and their development and resulting population structures. Invertebrates are wonderful — they have many ways of surviving and reproducing. Their stories tell us about the connectivity of marine populations and their resilience.'

This strength has been tested so far only by nature. As the human desire to reshape the oceans grows, scientists like Levin are determined to convey what a huge threat that poses — and how much extraordinary life under water could be destroyed.



AFTER: 77% of coral reefs are now bleached



TIMES GLOBAL

EVA LONGORIA REVEALS SHE HAS MOVED OUT OF 'DYSTOPIAN' AMERICA, SAYS TRUMP IS GOING TO MAKE US A SCARY PLACE

BRAD PITT & ANGELINA JOLIE'S BATTLE OVER \$500M-WORTH WINERY HEADS TO COURT, TRIAL COULD LAST UNTIL 2026

POLITENESS IS ORGANIZED, INDIFFERENCE — PAUL VALERY



RFK Jr Is Trump's Pick For Health Boss

Could Head A Dept With Oversight Of Agencies He Has Been At War With & Which Have Debunked His Claims

Chidanand Raghava TNN

Washington: MAGA supremo and President-elect Donald Trump continued to torch established norms as he picked Robert F Kennedy Jr, an anti-vaccine conspiracy theorist, to head the health portfolio, and demanded his term in office start from Nov 5, the day he won the election, instead of the constitutionally mandated Jan 20.

Kennedy's assignment to the department of health and human services (HHS) was widely expected considering Trump had urged him to "go wild" on the health front even before he was elected. But it still sent a jolt through the traditional establishment considering Kennedy's outlier stand on many issues relating to public health. Among them, his theory that vaccines cause autism, his campaign to remove fluoride from water supply which experts say had beneficial effects; his canvassing for raw milk, and dodgy Covid therapies, including promoting hydroxychloroquine, which the FDA said is ineffective in treating Covid-19.

However, his campaign against America's junk food fetish is widely appreciated—even by Donald Trump, who is himself a burger king sworn to colas "for too long. Americans have been crushed by the industrial food complex and drug companies who have engaged in deception, misinformation, and

THE CONSPIRACY MAN

► Robert F Kennedy Jr said in a podcast interview in July that "there's no vaccine that is safe and effective" and told FOX News that he still believes in the long-ago debunked idea that vaccines can cause autism

► "I see somebody on a hiking trail carrying a little baby and I say to him, 'Better not get them vaccinated,'" Kennedy said in 2021, adding that he advises people to "resist" CDC guidelines

► He has accused Anthony Fauci and Bill Gates in his 2021 book, "The Real Anthony Fauci", of exaggerating the pandemic to promote vaccines

► In 2021, he promoted

the disproven conspiracy that 5G cellular networks allow govts to 'control' their behaviour

► In recent past, he has claimed that WiFi radiation causes cancer, 'cellphone tumours' and 'opens your blood brain barrier' to toxins

► He has also questioned whether 'phony' HIV causes AIDS and suggested antidepressants lead to school shootings

► In early Nov, he said he would recommend fluoride be removed from public water supplies, falsely claiming on X that the chemical is associated with bone fractures

cancer

of gold standard scientific research and beacons of Transparency, to end the chronic disease epidemic" in America

In effect, Kennedy will be heading a department with a \$2 trillion budget and 80,000 employees, with oversight of the very agencies (FDA, CDC, NIH etc) which he has been at war against and which have debunked many of his claims. He will

also be fighting the unhealthy junk food habits of the very voters who put Trump in office. MAGA Republicans win most of the unhealthiest, least-educated, poorest states in America, with some of the worst health metrics, including obesity.

Like most of Trump's nominees, Kennedy too appears to have some skeletons in the closet—in his case literally a bear carcass he dumped in NYC's Central Park after initially intending to skin it for meat; and another time sawing off the head of a beached whale and driving home with it strapped to his car roof. Typical of the Kennedy family (he is the nephew of President John F Kennedy and son of his brother Robert F Kennedy), RFK Jr has other sporty scandals and controversies on his resume.

But Trump is attempting a Hail Mary for his dodgy nominees by indicating he intends to skip FBI background checks (because of his deep distrust of the institution) and bypass senate confirmation hearings, the two wire-trimmers for questionable nominees. So off the charts are Trump's nominees that liberal political junkies and language mavens are proflinging a rarely used term to describe his administration: in the making: Kakistocracy, which describes a govt led by the least suitable or competent citizens of a state.

Liberal and moderate commentators can't seem to decide

which is Trump's worst nomination. "Any one of the last three of Trump's cabinet-level picks (Tulsi Gabbard as DNL, Matt Gaetz as AG, RFK Jr for HHS), standing alone, would arguably have been the worst in American history. The fact that Trump made all three in a span of roughly 24 hours is astonishing. Congratulations, Mr President. Elated—and everyone who voted for him—on this kakistocratic hat trick," anti-Trump Republi-

cans George Conway wrote on X.

The purported kakistocracy would normally have had to pass the smell test of gerontocracy in the US Senate (whose median age is around 66 years). But GOP Senate grandees are being intimidated by younger MAGA Republicans in the House of Representatives (median age 56) with warnings that they will be defeated in upcoming elections if they resist Trump nominees. A third of the 100-member Senate will go to the polls in mid-term elections in 2026. So much in thrall are MAGA Republicans of Trump that one congressman touched new heights of sycophancy in America. He's got a mission and his goals and objectives. Whatever that is, we need to embrace it. All of it. Every single word. If Donald Trump says jump three feet high and scratch your head, we all jump three feet high and scratch our heads and that's it."

Troy Nehls, from Texas, said.

US correspondent for TOI

Musk met Iran's UN ambassador to discuss ways to defuse tensions with US, say Tehran officials

Farnaz Fassihi

Elon Musk, a close adviser to President-elect Donald Trump, met with Iran's ambassador to the UN on Monday in New York in a session that two Iranian officials described as a discussion of how to defuse tensions between Iran and the US.

The Iranians said the meeting between Musk and ambassador Amir Saeid Iravani lasted more than an hour and was held at a secret location. The Iranians, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, described the meeting as "positive". Asked about whether there was such a session, Trump's communications director said: "We do not comment on reports of private meetings that did or did not occur." Musk did not respond.

Musk has emerged as the most powerful private citizen in the Trump transition, and has sat in on nearly every job interview. During a call last week with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, the president-elect handed the phone to the billionaire. Musk has played a key role in providing commu-

nications capability to Ukraine in the war with Russia.

An early direct meeting between a senior Iranian official and Musk raises the possibility of a change in tone between Tehran and Washington under the Trump administration, despite a charged history between the president-elect and Iran One of the Iranian officials said

Zelensky says war will 'end sooner' under Trump admin

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Scholz's (L) car opened 'Pandora's box' by undermining efforts to isolate the Russian prez. Now there may be other conversations, other calls. Just a lot of words. And this is exactly what Putin (R) has long wanted: it is extremely important for him to weaken his isolation

According to Russian sta-

to media, Putin told his German counterpart that any peace deal in Ukraine must be based on "new territory, realities and, most importantly, address the root causes of the conflict."

Putin has repeatedly said Russia will not hand over Ukrainian territory it has captured and will demand guarantees of Ukrainian neutrality in any peace talks.

Scholz spoke with Presi-

dent Zelensky of Ukraine before the call with Putin. NYT

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German Chancellor Scholz sa-

died in an interview published Friday that Trump privately held "more nuanced position on Ukr-

aine than is often assumed"

Scholz, who spoke with Trump by phone on Sunday, told the German Sueddeutsche Zeitung daily his call was "a very detailed and good conversation" about the situation in Ukraine. Asked what her Trump would make a deal over the head of the Ukrainians, Scholz said Trump gave "no indication" he would. AGENCIES

planned to hush it up. "So the question is, where can I complain about this b***h now so that she'll be kicked out of the fucking country or sent to the devil in jail?" she said in the clip, which went viral on social media.

At the trial, Buyanova denied making the comment. But despite a lack of further adult witnesses, the denunciation was sufficient to destroy her 40-year medical career and her life.

The doctor, who had been in pre-trial detention since April, appeared before a Moscow court on Tuesday, her grey hair closely cropped. She was found guilty under a wartime cen-

tury law of "publicly spreading deliberately false informa-

tion" about the armed forces

and sentenced to five-and-a-

half years in a penal colony.

Buyanova was born in Ukraine but is a citizen of Russia, where she has lived and worked for three decades. Her lawyer said the defence believed Akhishina acted out of malice because of the doctor's Ukrainian origins. Akhishina did not respond to written questions for this story or answer her phone.

At the trial, she stated: "We are Russian. Buyanova hates Russians. She feels hostility towards me, that's what I think," according to a transcript by independent Russian outlet Mediamzona. The prosecution's case

is helping President Putin's govt crack down on dissent.

In a video recorded as she was walking away from the clinic, the mother, Anastasia Aksinya, said she had told the doctor the boy was traumatised because his father was killed fighting for Russia in the war in Ukraine. "Do you know what she told me? 'Well, my dear, what do you expect? Your husband was a legitimate target of Ukraine,' she said, mimicking the doctor's voice and intonation.

Fighting back tears, Aksinya said she had raised the incident with the hospital administration and suspected they

were the wave of denunciations

Putin talks with Scholz, breaking ice with West

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and President Vladimir Putin of Russia spoke by phone for an hour on Friday, in a discussion that German authorities said centered on prospects for bringing an end to the war in Ukraine. It appears to have been the first call between Putin and a sitting leader of a large Western country since late 2022. The Kremlin confirmed the conversation and said Scholz initiated the call.

Scholz told Putin he believes that the deployment of North Korean troops to assist Russia in its war with Ukraine amounts to a serious escalation of the conflict, according to the German government's summary of the call. Scholz called on Putin to end the war, contending that Russia had not achieved any of its goals more than 1,000 days since its invasion, the summary said. Scholz condemned Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure and told Putin Germany would continue to assist Ukraine

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CONTRAPUNTO

Socialists invent class, nationalists invent the nation, and so the populists invent 'the people'

—CAS MURDOH

Don's Darlings

Voters want a shake-up, so long as he delivers

The lib commentariat, all shook by the breadth of the Trump win, didn't even get a chance to catch its breath, before his selections for key govt positions started coming in fast and furious, and had them gasping all over again. Some of these picks have a comfortable conventionality, such as Marco Rubio for Secretary of State. Many do not.

Tulsi Gabbard, his pick for Director of National Intelligence, says that resistance from "the swamp in Washington" is to be expected. How long the Trump govt will stay on the right side of this anti-establishment tilt will of course depend on how his eventual crew delivers on his promises. It will have to square several odd pledges too, such as raising tariffs and reducing inflation. But first, it can enjoy a honeymoon period, basking in phrases like America First and Dream Team, before these are put to the test. Afterwards, much will come down to whether Arjun-like focus on reform targets. Don't get derailed into waging war against the critics. Many a popular mandate is done in by vindictive neuroses.

Meanwhile, the calling out of his candidates' qualifications loses half the crowd when it's prefaced by declaring Trump himself as unqualified for the job. He has won both the Electoral College and a popular vote convincingly drawn from across all the demographic categories. Insofar as his post-2020 candidacy has been even more disruptive than in 2016, the mandate he has got is for an even more Trumpian govt. He did pick more establishment candidates then, and how that played out would be influencing his decisions now, making 'loyalty' climb much higher on the CV meter.

BahuBullies

In India, daughters-in-law don't have rights, just 'duties'

Stopping a wife/daughter-in-law from visiting temples, watching TV, or forcing her to sleep on the ground aren't, legally, 'cruelty', held Bombay HC's Aurangabad bench in a dowry, abetment to suicide case, acquitting the dead woman's marital family. Judges have the latitude to read the law basis own values – and they're plucked from the very society they serve, so such a reading is unsurprising. For, the real cruelty is such attitudes to daughters-in-law remain routine.

Beti-beti welfareism of several decades ensured much progress in how far the 'daughter' has come. But it remains a scary road to 'daughter-in-law' status. Will the marital home be a safe space? Or hell? In the marital home, her "duties" are sharply defined, but her basic rights ambiguous – if anything, a source of conflict. Her well-being is at the mercy of in-laws' expectations. Suffice to note studies show the number of grandkids is decided on grandma's preference, where bahu is less educated than mom-in-law.

Popular culture without pause reiterates the daughter-in-law code of conduct: 'obedience' numero uno. Society celebrates 'bahus' juggling multiple roles till the last breath, but hey, not a choo of complaint – it is her 'dharma' to serve us so. PM-EAC policy briefs on caregiving note "women are coming under extraordinary pressure due to...disproportionate burden of care...on their shoulders... touching all the right chords: invisible work, failing PLFS, etc. But policy works in silos. Survival of the family as society desires it rests 100% on controls over the daughter-in-law. Is it killing her? Of course it is. But apparently, that's alright – even for HC judges.

Losing Our Senses & Serendipity

Technology is dooming us to virtual unreality

Today, the line between the online and offline worlds is blurred, as phones and algorithms mediate more of our daily activities. Most of what passes for authentic experience is vicarious and virtual. *The Extinction of Experience: Being Human in a Disembodied World* by the philosopher Christine Rosen reminds us of the value of the physical reality we share.

It wasn't always this way. Direct experience is our first teacher. A fighter's scar, stretch marks from pregnancy, metaphors about a broken heart, or a nosy neighbour, these remind us that we experience things with our bodies. Face-to-face interaction is how we learn patience, and a sense of public space. It helps us conceptualise a shared reality.

But now, online communities tell us how the 'real world' works. Consensus reality seems insubstantial as more of us mistrust our actual experience and live in these mental cocoons. Increasingly, young people prefer virtual interactions. To minimise awkward human contact, airports rely on kiosks to check-in and salespersons are replaced by iPads.

We're meant to look at each other. Our intuition rests on the ability to read faces, physical signals, postures, micro-expressions. Encountering each other on screens, through texts and posts, deprives us of that ability. Children's first experience of play, music, words, might now come from screens. Teachers struggle to hold their attention in real classrooms. Reading emotion and intent needs extended. In person contact, a capacity that children and teens are increasingly missing out on as physical playtime shrinks.

"Veja du" is what some technologists call this illusory reality: the sense of having done something virtually without having experienced it in real life. We consider ourselves familiar

with famous destinations through VR, or imagine what we'll look like when we age, or even simulate romantic relationships with fictional characters.

This means losing out on embodied cognition. We think with our bodies, by making things physically. Note-taking on a laptop means shallow processing. Architects who draft by hand know the connections between mind and body that they are trading off for the efficiency of computation.

We now perform our emotions, with memes, gifs and emojis. One study found that college kids score 40% lower on empathy than those from 30 years ago, and this decline coincides with smartphone adoption.

Tech is also racing to supply what we miss in terms of bodily cues. Sensors and gadgets to measure breathing, heart rates, autonomic nervous signals already exist, but could soon be a standard smartphone capability. Persuasive tech, armed with huge amounts of precise data, could manipulate us and subvert our intentions.

Even the mediated pleasures of online living – the capacity to experience travel, sex, food, art, music – are overstimulating, the book says. "Artificially strong explosions of strong synthetic experience" habituate us, weaken our ability to notice the less intense moments of real life, which are more like "fleeting whispers of pleasure". As public places in cities – pavements, parks, cafes became spaces where we are half in and half out, absorbed in our phones, we are robbed of serendipity and civic bonds.

While such panics have accompanied all new technologies from telegraph to television, the book warns that the digital takeover has had sudden and sweeping effects, and that it is important to recognise what we lose with every convenience we gain.

mindfield

SHORT TAKES ON BIG IDEAS



Columnist based in New Jersey

Dan Cassino

Republicans are hopeful that Trump will now be able to fundamentally reshape American govt in a way that largely eluded him during his first term. This belief follows from Trump this time being unbound by a need to run for re-election, or by insider appointees who thwarted some of his more extreme ideas last time.

A flurry of appointment picks by the President-elect includes far-right Matt Gaetz as Attorney General and former Democrat Tulsi Gabbard as Director of National Intelligence. The one announcement Maga Republicans are really excited by is that Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy will be leading a Department of Government Efficiency. But despite Trumpers' confidence, he isn't likely to have an easy time carrying out his ambitious agenda.

White there is a great deal that a US President can do on his own – action on immigration, tariffs, or foreign policy – most changes to domestic policy, like those expected from DOGE, require that he go through Congress. And while Trump will come into office with majorities in both House and Senate, and likely has two years before Democrats take control of one or both chambers, this doesn't ensure that passing bills will be easier.

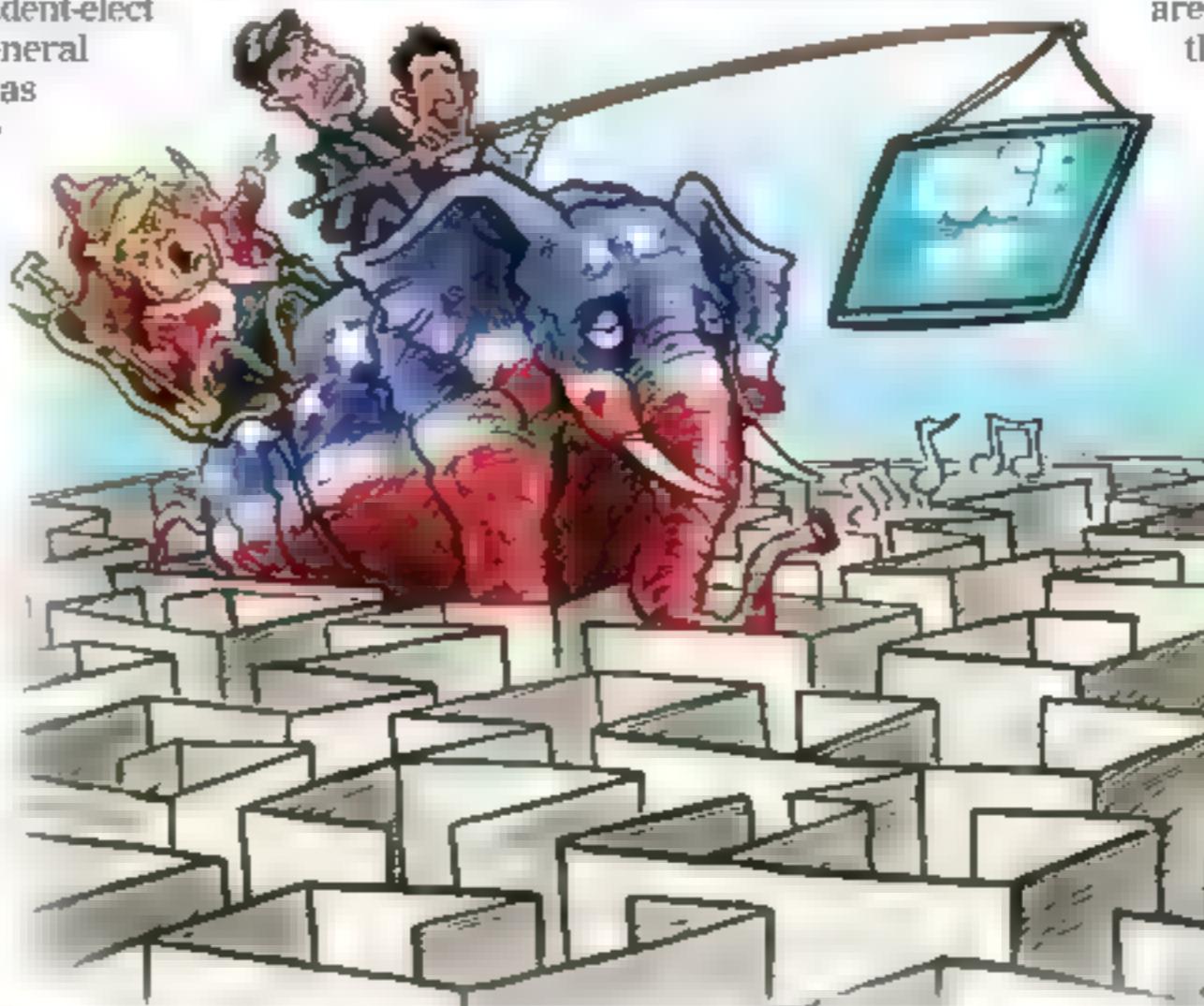
US President's ability to shape Congress to his demands is largely driven by his popularity, and Trump is going to come into office with the same kind of low approval numbers that characterised his first term.

When Eisenhower was President in the 1950s, he was enormously popular – more popular in the districts of many members of Congress than those members of Congress themselves were – and he was able to use that popularity to trample over the opposition to his agenda.

Jimmy Carter, on the other hand, was so unpopular by the end of his term that his legislative proposals were routinely ignored by Congress. Unable to get anything done in Congress, he was reduced to filling out the tennis schedules for the White House courts. Trump can threaten members of Congress, but low popularity means they can also choose to ignore him.

His attempts to pass bills will also be complicated by the very narrow margin he can expect in the House of Representatives, which operates on a majority rule basis. If the Speaker can secure a majority of the chamber, he or she can ram through just about any bill, with little or no opportunities for debate or amendment.

Some Speakers, like former Democratic Speaker Nancy Pelosi, proved themselves adept at pulling together majorities, even when the margins were tight. The current Speaker, Mike Johnson, has so far shown himself to be largely incapable of building those coalitions.



needs to be weakened to allow them to pass their legislative agenda. And while there might be a majority of Republicans willing to vote for that agenda, historically, there has never been a majority willing to drastically reduce the power of the filibuster.

Senators like the power it gives them as individuals to shape laws, and they worry about what a majority of the other side would do if they didn't have to worry about filibusters. Senators, unlike Trump, are likely to be worried about what happens five or ten years from now, when they're in the minority party, and therefore are cautious about hurting the power of the minority in the Senate now.

Of course, in both House and Senate, Trump is helped by the fact that most of the Trump sceptical Republicans, like John McCain or Mitt Romney, are no longer in office.

Many of the traditional conservatives who pushed back on Trump's legislation during his first term, as when McCain blocked the passage of Trump's attempt to repeal Obamacare, aren't in office anymore. Trump may have smaller majorities to work with in Congress, but those votes are much more loyal than during his first term.

Musk, Ramaswamy, and many of the people that Trump is bringing into govt believe that they can come in and fix the system. But there is precedent for the Department of Government Efficiency in Trump's first term – the Office of American Innovation.

That office brought together tech leaders like Jeff Bezos and Tim Cook in an attempt, led by Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, to fundamentally reshape federal govt along the lines of tech companies. Like DOGE, it started out with great ambitions – to solve the opioid crisis, boost the economy, modernise federal govt. With that much talent, and the ear of the President, it seemed like a sure bet.

At the end though, it made some recommendations, which were largely ignored by Congress, and was disbanded. Unless Trump does something fundamentally different this time around, and is somehow able to overcome the greater barriers facing him in his second term, his legislative agenda, and DOGE, are likely to meet the same fate.

The writer is Professor of Government and Politics at Pennsylvania Dickinson University.

Abuja Marks The Beginning Of This African Safari

Former envoy to key African nations argues PM's Nigeria visit is crucial bilaterally and for increasing India's heft in the continent

Rajiv Bhatia



Modi travels to a two-day trip to Nigeria – capital, Abuja – starting today. It constitutes the first leg of PM's transcontinental foray into summit diplomacy, which will also see him attending G20 summit in Brazil on Nov 18-19 and then visiting Guyana.

This trip offers a valuable opportunity to advance India's growing cooperation with Africa and the Global South. It comes on the heels of the Indian President's recent visit to three African countries.

By picking Nigeria, PM has recognised this nation's unique significance as Africa's most populous nation and its fourth largest economy. India has enjoyed close historical ties with it, as well as a "strategic partnership". However, the relationship is a work in progress, requiring a strong political push, especially as Nigeria is a regional and continental powerhouse.

Given its rich civilisational legacy, the Commonwealth connection, and its strong belief in unity amidst ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity, Nigeria has much in common with India. After struggling with a disastrous civil war and a cycle of military coups, Nigeria succeeded in building a democratic polity from 1999 onwards.

The nation admires India's classic path of 'democracy with inclusive development', drawing it to the country. Thanks to the excellent work of Indian teachers and traders in the past, the two peoples are familiar with each other.

With Bollywood being another factor

that has brought them closer

Modi will become the fourth Indian PM to visit Nigeria, after Jawaharlal Nehru (1962), Atal Bihari Vajpayee (2003), and Manmohan Singh (2007). The gap of 17 years since the last prime ministerial visit is notable, but it was punctuated by the visit of Vice President Hamid Ansari in 2016.

The commonalities and complementarities between the two countries make them natural allies. Betting on Africa's economic growth and expanding global profile, India needs to cooperate more extensively with Nigeria, which is a member of regional groupings like Ecowas and Opec.

In this context, there is need to expand India's investment commitment of over \$27bn. Development cooperation, too, can be scaled up. Over 200 Indian companies based in Nigeria are regarded as the biggest foreign employer in the country.

India recognised Nigeria's global significance by inviting it as a guest nation to the G20 Summit last year. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who participated in the summit, is reciprocating the gesture by now hosting Modi. Taking the cue, Brazil has invited Nigeria to the G20 Summit this year, and South Africa may do so next year.

Nigeria has, thus, indeed arrived on the world stage. It is especially pleased with India's leadership role that resulted in the African Union securing permanent membership of G20. Nigeria's entry into Brics as a partner state is further proof of its growing heft.

Preparatory work has already been completed to elevate the India-Nigeria relationship. In Jan, foreign minister Jaishankar visited Nigeria to co-chair the Joint Commission meeting and held wide-ranging discussions with key stakeholders. Yet, on the economic side, there are challenges. Bilateral trade has declined from a peak of \$14.95bn in 2021 to \$7.85bn in 2023.

This is partly due to India buying Russian oil at a discounted price rather than Nigerian crude from spot markets and partly due to Nigeria banning rice imports. However, India's export of engineering and pharmaceutical goods has much potential for bilateral trade. Areas such as agriculture, green energy, healthcare, and digital cooperation also show promise.

In this context, there is need to expand India's investment commitment of over \$27bn. Development cooperation, too, can be scaled up. Over 200 Indian companies based in Nigeria are regarded as the biggest foreign employer in the country.

Besides, the 80,000-strong Indian community has been making a useful contribution to bilateral relations.

Defence ties represent another significant pillar. The National Defence Academy at Kaduna and Naval War College at Port Harcourt are fine examples of defence cooperation between the two nations, buttressed by regular dialogue, exchange of training facilities, and Nigeria's purchase of Indian defence equipment.

Strategic cooperation is now being piloted through a periodic dialogue between NSA's Ajit Doval recently hosted the latest round. The dialogue focused on forging a close partnership to counter threats from terrorism, extremism, and radicalisation through cyberspace, international crime, arms, and drug trafficking, and a practical programme to enhance maritime security.

During Manmohan Singh's 2007 visit to Nigeria, four agreements were signed, and an understanding was reached to conclude nine additional agreements. Several of these agreements are nearing finalisation, and a few may be signed during Modi's visit.

The leaders now need to institute an effective mechanism to monitor progress in implementing all agreements. Greater involvement of apex business chambers should also be encouraged.

Finally, financial support should be extended to universities and think tanks to undertake studies on India-Nigeria relations and ensure dissemination of such efforts. Greater engagement at the people-to-people level would yield rich dividends in the long term.

Sacredspace



You don't meditate to experiment with altered states of consciousness or whatever else. You meditate only to perceive yourself that everything is within every atom of the universe and that we already possess everything we would wish to find outside of ourselves.

Daniel Odier



From Matter To Consciousness To Supreme Cognition

Shri Shri Anandamurti

What is the meaning of the term "purush"? The first meaning is the entity that lies quiescent in the psycho-physical structure of another entity. It is called Purush. You may have noticed that different people perform various tasks in a house preparing for a marriage ceremony. However, the head of the family does not do any specific task but supervises the proper completion of all tasks. Similarly, Purush, cognitive faculty, lies hidden in the physical body. Without His wish, no organ of the body can function.

While trying to discover the original cause of creation, we thought it must be eternal temporos. However, when the intellect developed, we discovered this hypothesis was incorrect because time is the mental measurement of the motivity of action. If there is no action, there is no question of any measurement of time. If the moon does not move around the Earth, no

question of days, months or years can arise. Hence, time is not the original cause.

Yet, out of inquisitiveness, human beings continued to search for the ultimate cause of creation. A question arose in their minds. Is nature the ultimate cause? The answer is no. Prakriti, the supreme operative principle, functions according to the limited freedom that Purush, the supreme cognitive faculty, has granted it. Purush is the transcendental entity. Prakriti is merely the immanent power of Purush. The style in which Purush functions is called nature. Nature cannot act independently and thus cannot be regarded as the absolute cause of creation, the supreme reflecting plate. The instrumental cause of the universe's metamorphosis lies in Prakriti's three principles. Prakriti is an entity that acts; however, it cannot be the

matter, cause or the efficient cause because there is no scope for any moral principle behind its actional faculty.

Shakti or energy is a blind force if not supported by prajna, intellect, it is always crude and static. The cognitive principle is both the material cause and the efficient cause of creation. In the flow of creation, the cognitive principle is also inseparably associated with the creative force. Hence, only the unmanifested supreme cognition, which is above both the cognitive principle and the operative force, can be the Supreme Reflecting Principle. When we reach both akshara and akshara, mutable and immutable, in the path of synthesis towards the One, we notice that in a previous stage, both of them have emanated from unmanifested, nirakshara, Supreme Cognition. This unmanifested Supreme cognition is the Supreme Reflecting Principle.

Sensex Loses Nearly 2,000 Pts In A Week

The sensex ended the holiday-shortened week with a 2.4% decline. The index logged its sixth weekly loss in seven, as worries about a slowdown in consumption added to concerns over earnings moderation.

Sensex
-2.4%

Sensex Gainers

Infosys	19%	-10.3%
HCL Tech	1.2%	-7.2%
Tech Mahindra	0.4%	-6.5%

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2024

Losers

Asian Paints	4.2%
Adani Ports	1.8%
Tata Steel	1.9%



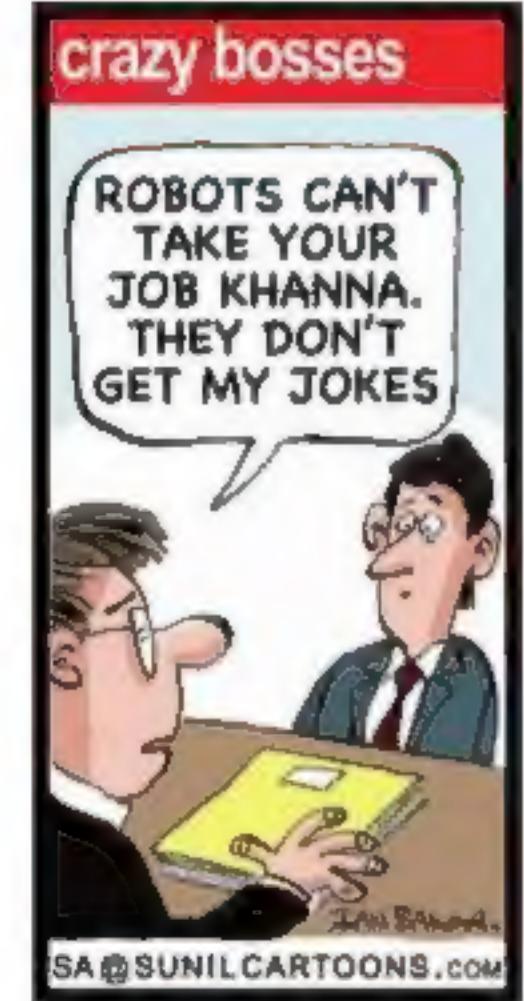
6.2%

Retail inflation surged to a 14-month high driven by food prices

Source: Refinitiv, ETIG

Reliance asks Trai to review reach of Musk's Starlink

New Delhi: Mukesh Ambani's Reliance has asked telecom regulator Trai to review the potential reach of Elon Musk's Starlink and Amazon's Kuiper before awarding satellite spectrum amid concerns local players could suffer, a letter showed on Friday. RIL's letter, which is not public, is Ambani's last-ditch effort in a face-off with Musk over how India should grant spectrum for satellite services. Starlink, Amazon & RIL did not respond. REUTERS



Forex reserves fall for 6th week to 3-mth low

Foreign exchange reserves dropped for a sixth week to a near 3-month low of \$675.7 billion as of Nov 8, RBI data showed. The reserves fell by \$6.5 billion in the reporting week and are down \$29.2 billion from the late-Sept peak. REUTERS

Gold trades near two-month low

Gold traded near a two-month low, as traders wind back expectations for a Federal Reserve interest-rate cut next month after comments from Fed chief Jerome Powell underscored resilience in the US economy. BLOOMBERG

Pharma stocks slide as Trump picks RFK Jr

Pharma stocks slumped as President-elect Donald Trump said he's tapping Robert F Kennedy Jr. to run the department of health & human services, potentially elevating a vaccine sceptic to a top role on health policy. BLOOMBERG

Reliance Big Ent fined ₹26cr by Sebi

Sebi has asked Reliance Big Entertainment to pay Rs 26 crore in fines for failing to clear penalties imposed by the market regulator in Aug this year (Rs 25 crore then) in a case pertaining to illegal diversion of funds. AGENCIES

figure it out

Over \$100tn is the projection of global public debt in 2024



Source: IMF

Chip design co MediaTek to boost India hiring

New Delhi: In a big push to govt's semiconductor localization plans, Taiwan's top chip design company MediaTek has said it will ramp up hirings in India as the company gained market leadership in supplies to smartphone makers, while it expands its business in automobiles, computing, connected, 5G, and internet-of-things (IoT).

The company will hire more engineers and designers in India to work on global chips as it moves ahead of American Qualcomm in supplying to smartphone makers in the country for their budget as well as premium devices (according to data from Counterpoint). India MD Anku Jain and global VP for corporate marketing Finbar Moynihan told TOI.

Online credit card payments' share rises to 65% on e-sales

In Transaction Volume, Offline Marginally Higher Than E-Pay

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DASH FOR DISCOUNTS



Mumbai: Online spends through credit cards have continued to surge driven by e-commerce discounts. In Sept 2024, credit card users spent Rs 1,15,168 crore online, accounting for 65.4% of the total Rs 1,76,201-crore card spends, official data showed.

In other words, for every one rupee spent by swiping credit cards at a point-of-sale machine, two rupees were spent online. In April, online spends were at Rs 94,516 crore, making up 60% of the total Rs 1,56,498 crore. The share of online spending rose to 63.4% in July, dipped slightly to 62.4% in Aug, and reached 65.3% in Sept bolstered by online sales.

While the value of online transactions has surpassed in-store payments for some time, volume of online transactions still lags physical transactions.

In Sept, in-store transactions numbered 19.8 crore, marginally higher than 19.4 crore online payments. In April, offline transactions were 18.4 crore compared to 15.9 crore online. The surge in online spending aligns with the rise in e-commerce sales during the festive season, which began in Sept.

Datum Intelligence estimated e-commerce sales in Sept and Oct reached about \$12 billion, up 23% from last year, driven by sales at e-commerce platforms like Flipkart and Amazon, where online sales rose 26%, led by mobile phones and electronics.

In quick-commerce, online card spends are growing 74% year-on-year, according to Datum — taking business away from kirana stores.

The growth in online payments is also supported by rising utility payments. In Q2 FY25, there were 62.7 crore online bill payments worth Rs 2,38,897 crore, up from 45.6 crore transactions totalling Rs 1,23,345 crore in Q1. The

CLSA shifts stand in favour of Indian stocks vs Chinese Broker's Reversal Follows Over ₹1L Cr Selloff

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: CLSA, a foreign brokerage with a huge client base of funds investing in India, on Friday reversed its stand of being overweight on China and equal weight on India to 'overweight India' following Donald Trump's win in the US election. CLSA analysts feel that in Asia, China is expected to be most affected by Trump's policies while India is least exposed to US's policy changes.

CLSA has now doubled India's overweight by 20%. The foreign broking major reversed its previous tactical allocation decision, shifting back from China to India. Its analysts cited three key factors for changing its position on China.

First, "Trump 2.0" heralds a trade war escalation as exports become the largest contributor to China's economic growth.

Analysts at CLSA feel that India stands out as one of the regional markets least vulnerable to Trump's unfavourable trade policies. Additionally, with stable energy prices, India potentially offers relative foreign exchange stability during a period of US dollar strengthening.

"Paradoxically, India

has seen strong net foreign investor selling since Oct, while investors we met this year have been waiting specifically for such a buying opportunity to address India's underexposure. Domestic appetite remains strong, offsetting foreign jitters, and valuation, though pricey, is now a little more palatable," the report said.

CLSA, however, has a caveat for India. Calling it "suffering from success: The risk of suffocation by primary flow", the report pointed out that at present fund mobilisation in India through IPOs and secondary offers combined has reached 1.5% of market cap.

This is a historic high level from where in the previous four occasions issuances as well as secondary market momentum had reversed. CLSA analysts feel currently this is the main risk for the Indian market.

VC fund General Catalyst looks to invest \$1bn in Indian startups

Siddhartha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Venture capital fund General Catalyst, which has invested in companies like Zepto, Spinni and Cred, is looking to invest \$800 million to \$1 billion over the next three years in Indian startups.

Having just closed \$8-billion fund, it is eyeing investments in manufacturing, fintech, healthcare, energy transition and artificial intelligence (AI) and defence, said General Catalyst CEO & MD Hemant Taneja.

"We are paying attention to India's potential leadership in AI, certainly as a talent and the expertise to

innovate, and second is manufacturing and the role of India as a supply chain leader as the world decouples from China," he told TOL.

Defence has emerged a key priority for General Catalyst and India can play a role, Taneja indicated.

OVER 3 YEARS

"There is an important need to create AI-enabled deterrence across democracies — India, Europe and the US. There is a fair amount of innovation that is needed. We are investors in a few companies in Europe and the US and we are trying to catalyse some other investments."

Taneja said the integration

of Venture Highways has enabled his fund to gain more scale in India. He also said that the flow of capital into Indian companies will be "more interesting" than before. "Public market valuations are exciting. If public markets are buoyant then it attracts more capital in the private sector and India is one of the fastest growing economies. From our standpoint, and we look at the long-term, India is a great place to be investing. India will be a great place for innovation and private investments in general," GCI president Teresa Carlson flagged regulation of AI as an area where discussions with govt were underway.

Canara Bank's decision came after a forensic audit report highlighted fraudulent transactions. The bank stated that Reliance Communications' response to an earlier show-cause notice was unsatisfactory, leading to the account's classification as fraud. TOL

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Reliance Communications informed stock exchanges that Canara Bank has classified the company and its subsidiary, Reliance Telecom, as fraud accounts. The company noted that this development is not expected to impact its operations as it is undergoing the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP), which protects it from any proceedings.

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wing the value up, which is, of course, trickling down to the semiconductor side in that they're choosing higher-end chips with more capability. Not just going from 4G to 5G, but going from like mainstream to medium to high-end chips. That's an opportunity."

Finbar said that MediaTek has a "large" R&D team in India, which is developing different technology sets, computing, connectivity, and software for many years.

"That's contributing to our global platforms and, clearly, that's important... The amount of consumer electronics devices, cars, automotive platforms, IoT devices that are going to be designed here, built here, and sold here, is only going to increase."

Jain said that India's "engineering talent is extremely important" for MediaTek. "India

is one of those rare countries which has a combination of English-speaking skills, and good engineering. This is unique, and not many countries can boast of this. Right now, we have over 1,000 engineers in India across three sites — Bangalore, Noida, and Mumbai. Definitely, it's growing. And we have a clear indication from our HQs that we have to find more talent here."

Jain said the Indian teams are engaged in software and hardware design, while working on the life cycle of chips. "It's quite elaborate," he said, adding that engineers here are good in analytical skills, mathematics, computer science, and electronics. "Around 90% of our talent here is for global R&D as they work on worldwide products, chip design and so on. The rest are for local support."

Inflation no bar for wealthy shoppers

High Prices Hit Mass Market Spends Even As Premium Products Drive Bulk Of Sales

Asmita.Dey@timesofindia.com

A survey by Paisabazaar on festive shopping trends among 700 credit card users showed a preference for online purchases due to card-specific offers and convenience. Of the respondents, 45% were from tier-1 metros, 68% were salaried employees, and 76% were under 35 years old.

The survey revealed that 80% of users found more value in online shopping during the festive season; 48% shopped exclusively online, while 45% combined online and in-store shopping.

Only 7% preferred in-store shopping. Around 80% of users utilised credit card offers on e-commerce platforms, with 85% planning their shopping around these sales events, driven by discounts, no-cost EMI options, and better deals.

Haier saw heavy demand for its premium range like AI-enabled refrigerators, washing machines and air fryer microwaves while Voltas recorded good sales of its SmartAir ACs.

Mumbai: Even as inflation has hit discretionary spending in the broader mass markets, the well-heeled continue to splurge.

Titan's watches priced above Rs 50,000 and its new Astra Meteorite pieces, which come with a price tag of Rs 1,30,000, saw takers this festive season. Premium products, in fact, drove the bulk of sales for the company, which claims to have recorded a 34% year-on-year growth in sales value in the recently concluded festive season. "Alongside, we also witnessed healthy volume growth of 27% (for watches), clearly indicating that consumer appetite for premium timepieces remains robust despite inflationary pressures," Rahul Shukla, VP and chief sales & marketing officer (watches & wearables) at Titan, told TOL.

Inflation typically impacts the lower strata of society, those who allot their budgets towards essentials when there is an uptick in the general price level. Mirroring the trend seen over the past few years, premium has been the flavour this festive season too — across categories ranging from fashion to electronics. For Godrej Appliances, ACs grew by 49% while fully automatic front-load washing machines were among the top-selling products. "Discretionary spending continues to hold steady, especially for premium households," said Kamal Nandi, business head & executive VP at the company which saw a 50% YoY growth in sales in Oct.

Although overall retail sales rose during the festive season, the growth rates were slower. Nomura estimates that sales grew at a slower 15% YoY in 2024 compared to 32% in 2023 and 88% in 2022. "The impact of inflation has been evi-

dent in mass markets where price sensitivity has curbed discretionary spending," Badri Beriwal, chief strategy & business development officer at Bata India, said.

'AI' REFRIGERATORS TO ₹50,000 WATCHES

Premium products drove the bulk of sales for Titan, which saw several takers for its watches priced above ₹50,000.

For Godrej Appliances, air-conditioners grew by 49% while fully automatic front-load washing machines were among the top-selling products.

Haier saw heavy demand for its premium range like AI-enabled refrigerators, washing machines and air

fridges microwave while Voltas recorded good sales of its SmartAir ACs.

On Amazon, premium smartphones priced above ₹30,000 saw the highest YoY volume growth. Luxe home sales also doubled, the platform said.

While retail sales rose during the festive season, the growth rates were slower. Nomura estimates that sales grew at a slower 15% YoY in 2024 compared to 32% in 2023 and 88% in 2022.

However, retailers are pinning hopes on the upcoming wedding season to fuel sales in the mass markets. Spending by the segment was not totally muted — categories like budget 5G smartphones priced at less than Rs 10,000, single-door refrigerators and semi-automatic washing machines have seen traction. "This growth in mass segment could also be linked to the onset of an extended wedding season across the country from mid-Nov," Nandi said, adding that it is likely to result in higher sell-out at stores in the next two months as well.

The festive period is still not over, there will likely be around 4.8 million weddings during the wedding season in Nov and Dec in addition to new-year related spending towards the end of the year," analysts at Nomura said.

At 8.8%, Chhattisgarh records highest retail inflation in Oct

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chhattisgarh witnessed the highest inflation rate among states and Union territories in Oct, followed by Bihar, highlighting the inflationary pressures across the country stoked by stubborn food prices.

The latest retail inflation data for Oct released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed Chhattisgarh recorded an inflation rate of 8.8%, while Bihar had a rate of 7.8%. Odisha was in third place with a rate of 7.5%, followed by Uttar Pradesh at 7.4% and Madhya Pradesh at 7%.

Out of the 22 states and UTs for which data is available, half of them recorded an inflation rate above 6%. Delhi had the lowest inflation rate of 4%, followed by West Bengal and Maharashtra. According to the latest data, retail inflation surged to a 14-month high of 8.2% in Oct, led by soaring food

prices — particularly vegetables. The retail inflation rate in Oct has breached RBI upper tolerance band of 6%, dashing hopes of any cut in interest rates for now. Vegetables, cereals, fruits, oils and fats have been identified as key factors behind the price surge.

Experts say there are several factors that influence the varying inflation rates across states, including supply issues. The sharp increase in retail inflation and wholesale price inflation, which rose to a four-month high of 2.4% in Oct largely led by high food prices, has triggered a debate with commerce minister Piyush Goyal calling upon the Reserve Bank of India to cut rates, arguing that targeting food price inflation through interest rates was an "absolutely flawed theory." Earlier, RBI governor Shaktikanta Das had cautioned about upside risks to inflation from factors such as food prices and said a rate cut should not be taken for granted.

GALLERY**Rohan-Ebden duo finishes on a winning note**

Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden, who climbed to the world No.1 ranking as a team early in the season, finished on a winning note in the ATP Finals in Turin. Bopanna and Ebden, who lost their first two group encounters, playing themselves out of the season-ending feature, however claimed their last match as a team with a 7-5, 6-7 (6), 10-8 result against German pair of Kevin Krawietz and Tim Puetz.

Fritz secures semifinal spot: Italian world number one Jannik Sinner eased past Daniil Medvedev 6-3 6-4 in their final group match, leaving Taylor Fritz to seal a place in the semifinals of the season-ending ATP Finals after the American defeated Alex de Minaur 5-7 6-4 6-3.

Eng win 3rd T20I vs WI, clinch 5-match series: Fast bowler Saqib Mahmood again knocked the top off the West Indies' innings to set up England's 3-wicket win in the third Twenty20 International which clinched a series victory with two matches remaining. Set 146, England reached its target with seven wickets down and four balls to spare.

Haryana to face Odisha in final: Haryana will face Odisha in the summit clash of the 14th Hockey India Senior Men's National Championship. While Odisha defeated Manipur 4-2 in the first semifinal, Haryana edged out Uttar Pradesh 3-2 in the second semifinal. TNN/AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

CRICKET: Ranji, 9.30 am (Jio); Aus vs Pak, 2nd T20, 1.30 pm (Star); Eng vs WI, 4th T20, 1.30 pm Friday (FanCode); **FOOTBALL:** Nations League, Azerbaijan vs Estonia, 6.30 pm; Turkey vs Wales, 9.30 pm; Germany vs Bosnia-Herzegovina, 12.30 am Friday (Sony)

SHOCK AND DRAW

Messi, Vinicius Suffer Frustrating Night As Argentina Lose And Brazil Earn Stalemate

Montevideo: World champions Argentina suffered a 2-1 defeat to Paraguay while rivals Brazil were held to a 1-1 draw at Venezuela as South America's big guns struggled in CONMEBOL World Cup qualifying on Thursday.

It started well for Lionel Scaloni's team as they grabbed an early lead through Inter Milan striker Lautaro Martinez. Enzo Fernandez lofted a lovely ball over the Paraguay defence into the path of Martinez who drove in a low finish only for his celebration to be cut short by the linesman's flag. But a VAR review found that Martinez had been just outside and overruled the on-field decision giving Argentina a 11th-minute lead.

WC QUALIFIERS

It was an advantage that was to last just eight minutes though as the home side drew level in spectacular fashion.

Gustavo Velazquez whipped in a cross and Antonio Sana-bria fired past Emiliano Martinez with a brilliantly executed bicycle kick.

Two minutes after the interval Omar Alderete grabbed what proved to be the winner, rising at the back post to head home a cross from Inter Miami midfielder Diego Gomez.

Argentina struggled to create openings with Lionel Messi largely neutralised.

Vinicius Junior missed a penalty as Brazil had to settle for a point after a superb Raphinha free-kick was cancelled out by a second half strike from Telasco Segovia.

The result leaves the five-times World Cup winners in third place on 17 points. Brazil showed signs of their old swagger as they took the game to Venezuela at the Monumental



66 THEIR GOALS CAME FROM TWO OF OUR MISTAKES. WE NEED TO FIX OUR LAPSES ON SET-PIECES.
—Lautaro Martinez, ARGENTINA STRIKER

FRANCE-ISRAEL MATCH SEES 40 ARRESTS

Paris: Police made 40 arrests at a tense match between France and Israel in Paris but the city's police chief said on Friday the huge security operation had "worked very well". The Nations League game at the Stade de France on Thursday took place under intense security after fans of Israeli club Maccabi Tel Aviv were attacked in Amsterdam last week.

Around 4,000 police and members of the French security forces patrolled inside and outside the stadium, assisted by 1,600 civilian security personnel.

Stewards had to intervene at one point to stop fans from clashing in the stands. "A fight broke out which was immediately contained by the stewards," Paris police chief Laurent Nunez told France 2 television.

The match finished in a 0-0 draw with no further incidents inside the stadium.

The draw was enough to secure France a top-two finish in its group along with Italy, which beat Belgium 1-0 away thanks to Sandro Tonali's 11th-minute goal. They advance to the quarterfinals in March, from which the lineup of the Final Four mini-tournament in June will be determined.

Germany and Spain were the first two nations to qualify for the quarterfinals in October.



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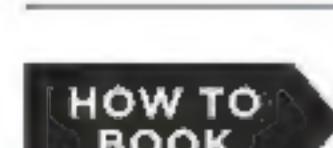
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